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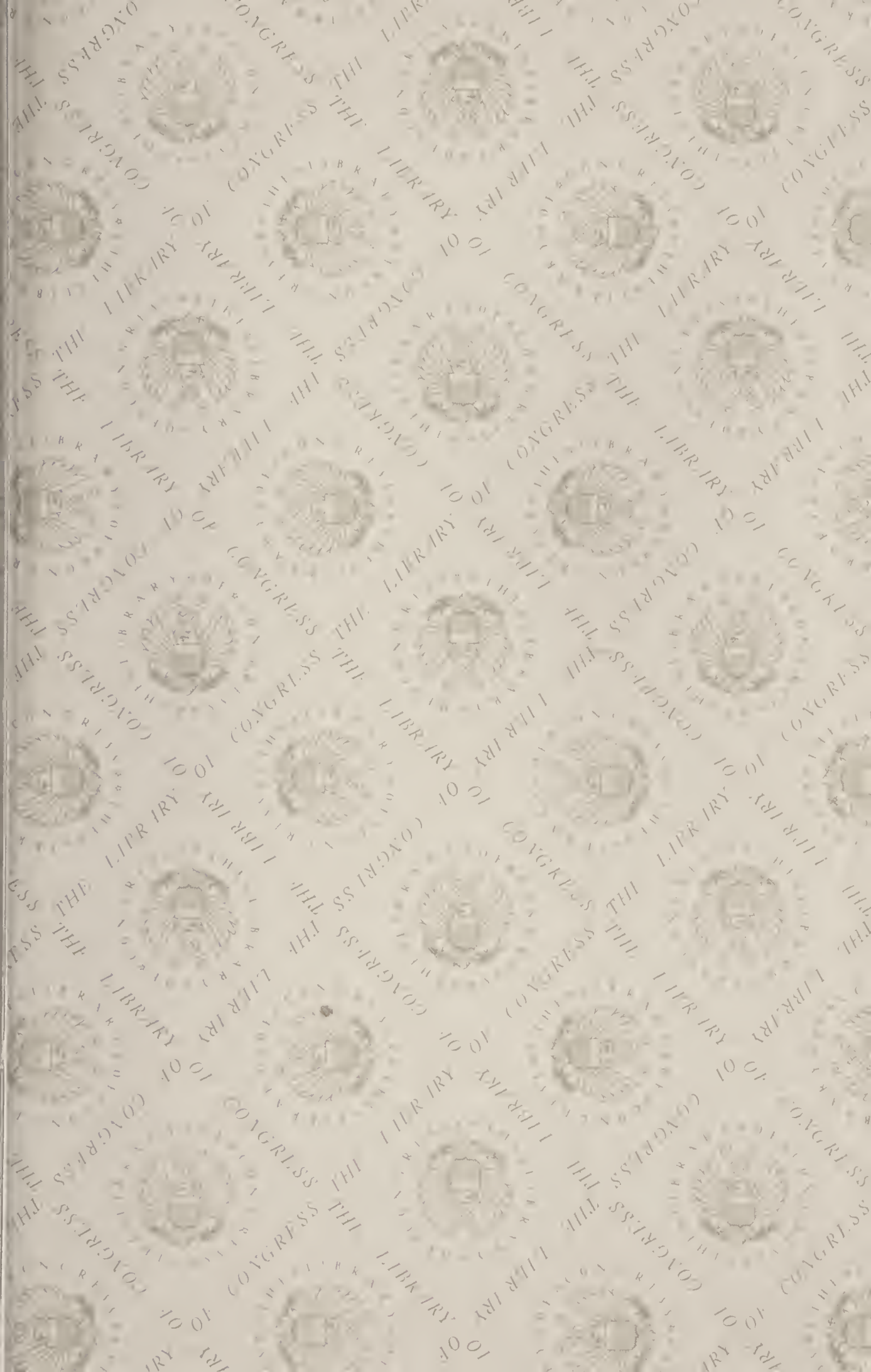
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ROXY WAS TOO SURPRISED TO MOVE

A YANKEE GIRL AT ANTIETAM

By
ALICE (TURNER) CURTIS

Author of

"A Yankee Girl at Fort Sumter," "A Yankee Girl at Bull
Run," "A Yankee Girl at Shiloh"

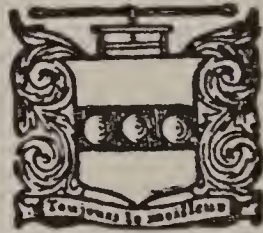


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A Yankee Girl at Antietam

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A Yankee Girl at Antietam

A Yankee Girl at Antietam

CHAPTER I

ROXY AND POLLY

ROXANA DELFIELD, wearing a dress of blue checked gingham, stout leather shoes and white stockings, and a broad-rimmed hat of rough straw, ran down the narrow path that led from her Grandmother Miller's farm to the highway leading to the little village of Antietam, Maryland.

The path curved about a rocky ledge, skirted a group of small cedar trees and reached a stone wall where there was an opening just wide enough for one person to squeeze through. Roxy thought it was a fortunate thing that all the people at her Grandmother Miller's were thin enough to get through this opening, all except Dulcie, the negro cook, who declared her weight "up'ards ob two hunderd pounds." Dulcie, however, seldom left the farm, and when she did was obliged to take the longer way by the road.

When Roxy reached the wall she climbed to its top and stood looking anxiously along the gray road that skirted a wooded hill, and in a few moments a brown horse, harnessed to a light wagon, and driven by a bareheaded girl whose red hair gleamed in the June sunshine, trotted into sight and came rapidly down the hill.

“There she comes! There’s Polly!” exclaimed Roxy scrambling down the rough wall, and hurrying across the little field to the side of the road where she stood eagerly awaiting the approach of her new friend, Polly Lawrence, and in a few minutes the brown horse stopped directly beside her, and the red-haired girl called out:

“Here we are, little Yankee girl; jump in,” and she reached down a strong brown hand to help Roxy climb into the wagon.

“This is splendid!” Roxy declared happily, as she pushed herself well back on the broad seat, and looked up admiringly at the tall girl beside her.

Polly smiled, her white teeth reminding Roxy of the string of pearl beads that her mother sometimes wore, and as she looked at her companion she realized that everything about Polly seemed

to hold the light and the glimmer of sunshine. Not only did Polly's waving hair hold golden gleams, but there were twinkling lights in her blue eyes, and her skin seemed to glow, and her teeth to shine.

"Oh, Polly! I do like to look at you!" Roxy exclaimed ardently, and at this the older girl laughed aloud, and responded:

"Well, you can say as pleasant things as any Southern girl. Nobody would think you were born in Massachusetts."

"Why not, Polly?" Roxy questioned, leaning forward to look eagerly into her companion's face. "Why wouldn't anyone think I was born in Massachusetts?"

Polly continued to smile, but she answered quickly:

"I suppose because you have such good manners. But of course your mother was born in Maryland."

"Polly Lawrence! Stop this horse! Stop this minute!" demanded Roxy, clutching at the reins and scrambling down from the wagon seat as if meaning to jump to the ground. "I don't want to ride with you. I guess Maryland girls don't have all the manners. I guess little girls in

Newburyport wouldn't be s'prised to have other girls polite. I guess ——"

But before Roxy could say another word Polly's arm was about her, and Polly was saying:

"Oh, Roxy! I did not mean to be rude. Truly, truly I didn't. I only meant to praise you!"

"Stop the horse! I don't want to go to Sharpsburg. I want to go home," persisted Roxy. "If my mother *was* born in Maryland she went to school in Massachusetts, and maybe that is where she learned good manners."

Polly's arm released its hold on Roxy, and she brought the brown horse to a standstill.

"You can get out here, Roxy," she said gravely. "It won't be far for you to walk home." And without a word Roxy jumped from the wagon and turned on her homeward way.

"I don't care," she told herself. "Polly Lawrence talks as if people in Massachusetts were not as good as Maryland people. She always calls me 'Yankee,' as if I was an Indian or—or something!" and with a little sob, Roxy trudged along the road over which she had only a brief time before rode so happily; and on reaching the stone bridge she stopped and leaned against its rough

parapet, gazing down at the slow-moving waters of Antietam River.

For a little while Roxy could think only of her disappointment, and of Polly's unkindness, and wish herself back in her own home in Newburyport, where she had never even heard the word "Yankee," and where there were streets of pleasant houses, each one with its own garden, and where little girls visited each other every day, bringing their patchwork to sew; or if it was a "special party" the little girls would bring their fine dolls dressed in silk and muslin.

Newburyport was very different from this hilly country where every farmhouse was built of gray limestone, and stood on sloping field or pasture, thought Roxy, turning her gaze to an opening in the distant mountains where range upon range of blue heights rose against the sky.

"I do wish we were home," she whispered to herself. "I wish there wasn't any war!" For it was in the early summer of 1862, when Northern and Southern States were in arms against each other, and when President Abraham Lincoln had fully determined to declare the freedom of negroes held in slavery. Roxy's father was a soldier with the Northern Army in Virginia, and

Mrs. Delfield had taken her little daughter and come to her old home in Maryland hoping that her husband might secure leave of absence and join them.

It was now nearly a month since Roxy had first seen Polly Lawrence, whose father's farm adjoined the Millers'. Polly had at once made friends with the little Northern girl, and although she was nearly five years older than Roxy, she seemed to enjoy her company and had taken the little Northern girl on many a pleasant ride about the countryside, and on walks over the pasture-lands that stretched up the slopes behind the farms. It was Polly who told Roxy that the river had been named Antietam for an Indian chief, and that years before the white men had settled in this part of the country the Shawnee, Catawba and Delaware Indians, with feathered heads, painted faces, and clad in the skins of wild animals, had wandered along the banks of this placid stream and camped in the near-by valleys.

"But Polly has always called me 'Yankee girl,' " Roxy told herself, choking back a troublesome lump that came in her throat as she remembered that she had quarrelled with Polly Lawrence; with Polly, who was nearly fifteen years

old, and who knew so many wonderful stories, and who sang such beautiful songs, and who owned a horse! Oh! There never was anyone like Polly, even if she did think Maryland people better than the people of Massachusetts; and now Roxy leaned her head on the rough stones of the parapet and sobbed aloud, and was so filled with unhappiness that she did not hear the sound of horses' hoofs or the jingle of bridle-reins until two horsemen clattered onto the bridge close beside her; then she turned quickly and gazed up at them in amazement. It was Roxy's first sight of Confederate soldiers, and as she looked at the two war-worn men, in shabby gray uniforms, mounted on fine well-cared-for horses, it was no wonder that the little girl forgot her own troubles.

So far, in the summer of 1862, the war had not pressed hard on Maryland; the state seemed chiefly a highway through which passed the Northern troops; and Polly Lawrence had seen many marching men crossing that very bridge.

The two horsemen did not at first notice Roxy. One of them drew a paper from his pocket, opened it and said:

“ This is the road to Sharpsburg. I’m sure of it,” and before he could say more his companion exclaimed:

“ Well, little miss! You look surprised! Have you never seen a soldier before? ” and he smiled down at Roxy.

“ Oh, yes, sir! But all the soldiers I have seen wore blue clothes,” Roxy answered.

“ And where were these blue-clothed soldiers? ” continued the man, as he swung himself from the saddle and stood beside the little girl.

“ They were in Washington,” replied Roxy, “ but I saw my father’s regiment when it marched down High Street in Newburyport! ”

The man looked at her as if puzzled, and repeated “ Newburyport? ” and then glanced at his companion who now dismounted and stood near his horse’s head.

“ That’s not a Maryland town, is it? ” he questioned, and Roxy eagerly replied:

“ Oh, no! Newburyport is in Massachusetts. That’s my home, but my mother and I are visiting Grandma Miller! ”

The two men glanced at each other in evident surprise, and the man who had first noticed Roxy said thoughtfully:

“ I see! A little Yankee girl! ” And at this Roxy’s smile vanished.

“ ‘ Yankee girl! ’ ‘ Yankee girl! ’ I wish I knew why you say that? ” she exclaimed, her gray eyes looking steadily at the tall, gray-clad soldier.

“ Oh, only because your home is in the North! I reckon your father is proud to be called a Yankee,” he replied kindly, and at this Roxy’s face brightened.

“ Oh, thank you! Polly calls me ‘ Yankee girl ’ and I didn’t know why. But I shan’t care now,” she said, with a friendly nod at the tall man.

“ We might take a road that leads through the hills here,” suggested the second soldier, and for a few moments the two soldiers bent their heads over a small map and seemed to forget the little girl, who stood watching them wonderingly.

“ Good-bye,” said the good-natured soldier as he swung himself into the saddle. “ You will see more soldiers in gray clothes here before the end of your visit, or I miss my guess; eh, Richard? ” and he turned to his companion.

“ True enough! ” responded the man; “ the stars and bars will cross this bridge before many months! ”

“What is ‘stars and bars’?” asked Roxy.

“The flag of the Confederate States,” answered the man, and waving their hands in farewell they rode on. As they started one of the men began to sing, and the refrain of his song, “Maryland, My Maryland,” came drifting back to the little girl who stood looking after them.

“I suppose I’d better go home now,” thought Roxy. “I guess my mother will be surprised when I tell her about the soldiers. I suppose I will have to tell her about Polly, too,” and sighing deeply Roxy went on her way toward the narrow path that led to her Grandmother Miller’s. On a farther slope the vivid green of young wheat ran up to meet the darker green of forest trees; flowering dogwood and redbud grew along the stone walls, and the purple blossom of the papaw showed here and there, and Roxy looked at these blossoms admiringly, and wondered if they would grow in her garden in Newburyport.

She was only a short distance from the highway when she noticed something moving behind a thickly growing bush of dogwood. The branches bent forward, and Roxy stopped and gazed at it, half fearing that some wild animal

was sheltered there that might spring out and seize her. As she stood ready to run the branches sprang back and a boyish figure crawled out and slowly rose to his feet.

He was bareheaded, and his brown hair was long and rough. He wore gray shirt and trousers, and his shoes were so worn that they hardly covered his feet. Roxy was too surprised to move, but as the young man gazed toward her with a half-frightened, pleading look, she lost all sense of fear.

"Oh, what is the matter?" she asked. "What is it?"

"I'm starving!" came the whispered answer, and the young man sank down close to the bushes. "I can't go another step! Were those soldiers after me?"

"No! No! I don't believe so. Come up to my grandma's and you can have all you want to eat," Roxy said eagerly.

The young man shook his head. "I must not let anyone see me. You won't tell anyone about me. Promise!" he pleaded. "Promise not to tell a human being that you have seen me; and can't you get me something to eat? I have a safe hiding-place near here."

Roxy gave her promise promptly, and the young man urged her to bring him food as soon as possible, cautioning her not to let anyone know that she had taken it, and telling her to leave whatever she brought under the thicket of tangled vines and bushes behind which he had hidden.

“Remember not to let any human being suspect that you have seen a stranger,” he pleaded. “I haven’t strength to keep on without food!”

“I won’t tell! Truly I won’t!” Roxy promised; “and I’ll come back as soon as I can,” and before the young man could reply she had darted off up the slope. For a moment the young man gazed after her, and then crawled back to his hiding-place.

Roxy slipped through the opening in the wall, and then stopped for a moment and looked back.

“I wonder what he is running away from?” she thought, and then remembering the thin face and the pleading voice that had told her of hunger and fear the little girl hurried on. “I’ll take him some of those cakes Dulcie made this morning, and some milk, and some eggs, and everything I can find, poor fellow,” she thought pitifully. “I

know my grandma would want me to take the things if she had seen him."

As Roxy ran across the yard Dulcie appeared in the kitchen door and called out:

"How be it you's home so soon, missie? You ain' been ter Sharpsburg, hab you?"

Roxy stopped and looked at Dulcie with so sober an expression that the stout negro woman became alarmed.

"Wha's de matter?" she demanded. "You look's if you'd seen a ghos'! Wha's happen' to you, missie?"

"Nothing!" Roxy replied sharply. "I thought you were taking a nap, Dulcie."

Dulcie chuckled and nodded her turbaned head.

"Dat's so! Dat's w'ot I plan ter do dis minit. I'se jes' on de way!" and with another nod she ambled down the path toward her own cabin, and Roxy entered the kitchen.

CHAPTER II

POLLY'S RETURN

THERE was not a sound in the quiet kitchen as Roxy entered. For a moment the little girl stood still, listening intently, but the house itself seemed to be taking a nap in the mid-afternoon quiet of the June day.

“Mother and Grandma will be in their rooms now,” thought Roxy; “they won’t expect me home before the last of the afternoon. I’ll have plenty of time,” and she tiptoed across the well-scrubbed floor toward the pantry. Before she tried the door she again looked about the room cautiously, remembering her promise to the half-starved man who had trusted her, and fearful that someone might enter the kitchen before she could secure food and escape. Roxy knew that if her mother heard her Mrs. Delfield would at once want to know why she had not gone to Sharpsburg with Polly Lawrence, and even in the excitement of seeing the Confederate soldiers, and

of discovering the runaway, Roxy had resolved not to mention her disagreement with Polly. Already she felt a little ashamed, since the soldier had said her father would be proud to be called a Yankee, that she had been so ready to be angry at Polly.

But as she carefully opened the pantry door Roxy was thinking only of the poor fellow hidden behind the dogwood, and of what she could take him.

There on the lower shelf of the pantry, covered with a white cloth, stood a platter heaped with small round cakes that Dulcie had baked that morning. Roxy carefully lifted the cloth and gazed at them admiringly. "And there's citron and currants in every one," she whispered to herself, and carefully chose three of the cakes, and replaced the cloth.

"I'll have to have something to carry things in," she thought anxiously, and her glance fell on Dulcie's egg basket, where only three or four eggs remained.

"I'll take that, and the eggs too," she decided, and in a moment the three cakes rested beside the eggs, and Roxy's eyes searched the pantry shelves for something more.

The meat left from the midday meal would, she knew, be in the cool cellar closet, and Roxy feared she could not reach the shelf on which it was kept; but the bread jar was close at hand, and removing the cover Roxy drew out an entire loaf of freshly baked bread.

“Oh, dear! Just bread and cake and eggs isn’t enough,” she thought. “I must get him some meat,” and she left the closet and ran across the kitchen to the door that opened on the cellar stairway.

A cool air came up from the dark cellar as Roxy groped her way down the broad stone steps, and keeping close to the wall felt her way to the deep closet where many household supplies were kept.

It was hard work for the little girl to pull open the heavy door, but at last she succeeded, and stepped in. Dulcie always brought a lighted candle to the cellar, but Roxy had no light, and could only grope about.

“I’ll take whatever I find,” she resolved, clutching at something resting in a tin pan. “I’m sure this is the chicken Dulcie roasted this morning to have sliced up cold for supper,” she thought delightedly, thrusting it in with the bread and

cakes. "That will be splendid; and maybe it will be enough. I guess I won't wait to get milk," and Roxie left the cellar cupboard, the door swinging to behind her with a sudden bang that made the little girl jump with the fear that it might bring someone hurrying down the cellar stairs.

But no other sound was heard in the house; and now Roxie could see a dim square of light at the far end of the cellar, and remembered that there was a cellar door leading into the yard.

"I'll go out that way," she decided, and made her careful way among barrels and boxes to where another flight of broad stone steps led directly up to the back yard, and in a moment she was again in the open air.

The negro farm-hands were all in the fields attending to their work; the young colored woman who helped Dulcie in the work of the house had, as Roxy knew, gone for an afternoon's visit to a neighboring farm; Dulcie was taking her usual afternoon nap in her cabin, and Grandma Miller and Mrs. Delfield were resting in their own rooms. Roxy felt sure that no one would see her as she now ran across the yard and down the rough slope.

She slipped through the narrow opening, and now walked more slowly, and looked anxiously toward the road, fearful that some passer-by might see her; and as she drew near the thicket behind which she knew the hungry man lay hidden, she began to listen for some sound. Perhaps he would call out to her, she thought.

But there was now no movement among the blossoming branches of the dogwood; and with a little sigh of disappointment Roxy set the basket down where the man had told her to leave whatever she brought him. But she stood close beside it until a long brown arm reached through the underbrush and seized it.

“Bless you, little girl,” came a whispered voice.

And Roxy responded eagerly: “You are welcome.”

“Don’t stand there! Run home. Somebody may see you,” said the voice again. “And promise me again that you’ll be my friend and keep my secret, and never tell anyone that you have seen me.”

“I won’t tell; truly I won’t,” Roxy promised. “But what are you running away from?”

“From a southern prison. I’m a Yankee sol-

dier. I was taken prisoner at Manassas; and I'm sure those rebs on horseback were after me. Where is this place, anyway?" and now the young man pushed his head and shoulders out from behind the bushes, quite forgetting his cautions to his new friend.

"It's Antietam," replied Roxy; "where do you want to go?"

"Anywhere where there are Yankees. I've been hiding in the woods and swamps for days, and I've lost my bearings," he replied, as he pulled a leg from the chicken and began to eat ravenously.

"I'm a Yankee, and so is my mother, and we are living up in that house," said Roxy, pointing toward the farmhouse. "You needn't hide," she continued, "for I have heard my grandma say that Maryland is loyal to the Union. You come up to our house and Grandma will give you better things than cold chicken to eat; and—and"—Roxy hesitated a moment—"I guess she could give you some clothes."

For a few moments the young man ate steadily; the greater part of the chicken disappeared, and he had seized on the cakes before he spoke again.

“A Yankee girl, are you? Tell me your name.”

“My name is Roxana Elizabeth Delfield, and I’m ’most ten,” Roxy replied, and added quickly: “My father is a Yankee soldier,” and now the young man fixed his glance upon her, and a little smile crept over his thin face.

“Seeing you is the first good luck I’ve had for months,” he said slowly, and Roxy smiled happily.

“Come up to Grandma’s,” she urged. “You can rest, and then you can get some shoes; and then my mother will help you go wherever you want to. I know she will.”

But the young man shook his head. “I don’t dare take a chance. Someone might be on the watch for me. You keep your promise, little Yankee girl. Don’t speak of me!” and again Roxy promised. “I can’t go on before to-morrow; I’m used up,” he added. “I’m only resting here. I’ll have to find a safer place to sleep.”

There was the sound of approaching wheels on the near-by road, and with a quick word of caution the young man disappeared and Roxy turned to see Polly driving the brown horse and

light wagon coming rapidly down the highway. Roxy ran toward the road so that Polly would not notice any movement in the thicket; and as Polly saw her she drew rein, believing that Roxy had waited to make friends again.

“Oh, Roxy! Have you been waiting for me? Well, you are a dear! And have you forgiven your Polly-Wolly for being so horrid? I’ll never call you ‘Yankee’ again.” And the smiling Polly leaned down to touch Roxy’s rough straw hat.

“Oh, Polly, I like to be called ‘Yankee’ now! Two Confederate soldiers rode over the bridge and spoke to me, and one of them told me about Yankees, so I don’t care now,” and Roxy, with her flushed face and eager eyes, endeavored to return Polly’s good-natured smile.

“Those soldiers passed me. They are after a Yankee soldier whom they had held as a prisoner,” said Polly. “Poor chap! I hope they don’t find him.”

“They mustn’t! They mustn’t!” Roxy declared so seriously that Polly wondered to herself why the little girl should look so unhappy over the possible capture of a man she had never seen.

“I reckon it’s because they are both Yankees,”

thought the good-natured girl, who was well pleased to be on friendly terms again with her small neighbor.

“Well, they said they were coming back. They might run into Northern troops if they went beyond Sharpsburg. Here they come now,” and Polly drew the brown horse well out of the road as the two mounted soldiers, riding at a good pace, clattered over the bridge and stopped their horses close beside Polly’s wagon.

The men touched their hats smilingly, and the man who had told Roxy that her father would be proud to be called a Yankee, said:

“The Yank has fooled us and got well away, unless he’s hiding somewhere near at hand. You haven’t seen any half-starved runaway soldier about here, have you?” and he turned his sharp glance on the two girls.

“Oh, no!” Polly answered. “We wouldn’t let any soldier starve in Maryland. But I haven’t seen anyone since I met you on the road.”

The man nodded and smiled, and was about to ride on when his companion said gruffly:

“What about that other girl? She’s a Yankee. Maybe she’s hiding the fellow, or else her folks may be.”

Roxy's frightened glance convinced both the men that it might be possible the speaker was right, and when she turned and fled up the slope toward home they were sure of it, and in an instant both the men were off their horses and after her.

"If she reaches the house and warns him he'll get away from us again," panted the short man as he found himself obliged to climb the wall.

As Roxy neared home she began to call: "Mother! Mother!" at the top of her voice, so that when she dashed into the yard with the two men close behind her not only Mrs. Delfield but Grandma Miller, Dulcie and two negroes from a near-by field were all hurrying to meet her.

With her mother's arms about her, and Grandma Miller facing her pursuers, Roxy began to feel less frightened. She heard the strangers tell their errand, and explain that Roxy had told them she was a Yankee girl.

"You are Southern soldiers and you will take the word of a Maryland woman," said Mrs. Miller, "and I assure you that neither I or any member of my household have seen the runaway. Beside that, even if we sheltered him, you have no authority to demand him at our hands, nor would

we permit such a thing. Gentlemen, Maryland is a loyal state," and without waiting for any response Grandma Miller turned toward the house followed by Mrs. Delfield leading Roxy.

The little group of negroes stood watching the two soldiers.

"If you asks me I'd 'vise you to put off out ob dis paht of de lan'," said Dulcie. "Dar's sojers in blue coats up Hagerstown way dis minute."

"Come on, Richard," said the taller of the two men, "I reckon we'd better take Mammy's advice and let the Yank go," and they made their way down the slope, climbed the wall, and hurried to the highway. As they ran past the thicket they both shouted in amazement and anger, for the road was deserted. Not only had Polly and her brown horse disappeared but the fine saddle-horses were gone.

"That red-headed girl has made off with our horses, and for all we know may bring a party of Yanks after us," declared Richard; "we'd better make for the Virginia line."

His companion promptly agreed, and they hurried across the bridge, turned into a path that led by the river and disappeared.

CHAPTER III

A PAPER CIRCUS

BUT it was not Polly who had made off with the two saddle-horses; for as the two soldiers dashed up the slope after Roxy the runaway had appeared from his hiding-place, carrying the loaf of bread in one hand, and had hastened to where the two horses stood nibbling at the wayside grass; without a word to Polly he slipped the bread into a big pocket of one of the saddles, seized the swinging bridle reins and mounted the horse, and leading the other, was off at a gallop down the road toward Sharpsburg.

Polly stared after him until the sound of the hoofs of the speeding horses died away in the distance, and then turned her horse toward home. Her quick glance had noted the loaf of bread, and that something resembling the frame of a chicken bulged from the young man's pocket.

"He must have been hiding there all the time. I wonder where he got the bread?" thought the surprised girl, and she smiled at the thought of

the two men who were in search of him and who had been so cleverly misled.

“If Roxy had known about the man and planned to help him she could not have done anything better,” thought Polly. “Poor little Roxy! They frightened her half out of her senses,” and Polly resolved to go over that very evening and see her friend and tell her of the hidden man and of his escape from his pursuers.

But it was from Dulcie that Roxy first heard the news. Dulcie peering over the wall had seen the young man as he ran toward the horses, mounted and galloped out of sight, and when the gray-clad Confederate soldiers dashed past her she had chuckled with delight.

“Dey won’ be a-ridin’ off so gran’ as dey are spectin’ to,” she said. “Wot dey mean anyway a-prospectin’ roun’ in Marylan’? Dis state ain’ fer upsettin’ de United States Gubbermint. ’Deed it ain’t,” and Dulcie shook her head disapprovingly over the idea that Southern soldiers should so fearlessly enter a loyal state. Dulcie well knew that the great conflict between North and South meant not only the freedom of the negroes, if the Northern Armies were successful, but a united and undivided nation. Mrs. Miller

talked freely with her colored servants, and Dulcie was sure that whatever "Ole Miss" said was true; and she now hurried back to the farmhouse to tell the family what she had seen.

Roxy and her mother were in the big sitting-room, and the little girl was still greatly excited over her encounter with the soldiers; and beside that she was fearful and anxious as to the safety of the Yankee soldier. She had not mentioned him, remembering her promise, and her mother and grandmother did not imagine that Roxy had ever seen the man for whom the two soldiers were searching. That she should be frightened seemed only natural, although Grandma Miller carefully explained that the soldiers would only, had they overtaken her, have questioned her about the runaway.

"I know it," Roxy whimpered. "I wasn't afraid of them. The tall one looked like my father."

"What made you run then?" asked Mrs. Delfield, but before Roxy could answer Dulcie, smiling and bobbing her turbaned head, appeared in the doorway.

"What is it, Dulcie?" Mrs. Miller questioned,

wondering if the fleeing Yankee had been overtaken.

“De Yankee-man was hid up, Miss, down clus to de road; an’ when dose sojers come a-racin’ up de slope de Yankee-man put out ob de bushes an’ hists his-se’f on to one hoss, an’ he hol’s on to de udder one and off he goes!” and Dulcie flourished both hands to show how swiftly the fleeing man had disappearel.

“Oh, goody! Goody!” exclaimed Roxy, jumping up from the sofa where she had been sitting beside her mother, and running toward Dulcie. “Which road did he take? Was he out of sight before the men knew he was gone? Did he get away?” she questioned eagerly.

“For de lan’ sakes!” exclaimed the bewildered Dulcie. “W’ich one ob dose questions you spect me ter re-ply to, Missy? You kinder bewillers me!”

“Oh, Dulcie!” and Roxy jumped up and down in front of the old negress. “Tell me if he got away.”

“Ain’ I jes’ tole you? He got clare out ob sight, an’ he tuk de extra hoss! Yas’m, he was right clever, dat Yankee feller was. I spect he’s in Sharpsburg ’fore dis time.”

Roxy smiled so radiantly as she turned toward her mother that Mrs. Delfield smiled in response, well pleased that her little daughter should forget the fear and excitement of her adventure.

“What became of Polly Lawrence?” asked Mrs. Miller.

“Oh! Miss Polly jes’ druv toward home. She didn’ wait fer de gray coats to get back either,” and Dulcie went off chuckling with satisfaction.

“Well, Roxy, I think the Yankee boy owes his escape to you,” declared Mrs. Miller. “Your running off made the soldiers think you could tell them of the escaped prisoner, and so they ran after you, and that gave the man his chance.”

“As if the child could know ——” began Mrs. Delfield, but was interrupted by an outcry from the cellar, and Dulcie’s complaining voice as she made her heavy way up the stairs and came hurrying to the sitting-room.

“What can be the matter now?” exclaimed Mrs. Miller, starting toward the door.

“Ole Miss—Ole Miss! We’s robbed! Yas’m!” exclaimed Dulcie, nearly breathless. “My roas’ chicken bin stole. Yas’m! An’ I cayn’t lay eyes

on my egg basket, an' my bread am took!" and Dulcie stood rolling her frightened eyes and trembling with excitement.

"Why, Dulcie! It can't be! I have never had a thing taken from the house in all my life," declared Mrs. Miller, and with Dulcie beside her she hurried off to the kitchen.

Roxy gave a little exclamation, and Mrs. Delfield hastened to assure her that probably Dulcie was mistaken, and had forgotten where she had set the food. But the little girl seemed so troubled, so grave and quiet, that her mother felt anxious.

"Don't you want to finish the 'Circus,' dear?" she suggested. "You'll need a herd of camels, several elephants, beside lions and zebras."

But Roxy shook her head. Not even her beloved "Circus," on which she had worked several hours each day since her arrival at Grandma Miller's, seemed to interest her. When she had given the man the basket of food she had not thought of the fact that it would be promptly missed, and that Dulcie would make such an outcry over it. But, as no special person was suspected of taking it, Roxy quickly decided that all was well. Dulcie would scold and wonder

about her loss, and Grandma Miller would endeavor to find out who had really made off with the chicken, but no real harm had been done, so in a little while Roxy was quite ready to follow her mother's suggestion and begin on the animals that were to be a part of the "paper circus"; and when Mrs. Delfield followed Mrs. Miller to the kitchen to find out what had really occurred Roxy was happily at work near one of the wide windows that looked across the green wheat field toward the distant mountains.

A broad low table, that Grandma Miller said was Roxy's table, stood near this window. It had two deep wide drawers, and the straight-backed cushioned chair in front of it was exactly the right height and size for a little girl ten years old. Roxy could lean on her table and look out over the pleasant countryside, and see a distant bend of the slow-moving river.

She opened the upper drawer of the table and took out some squares of heavy brown paper, a pair of pointed scissors and a box of crayons; then Roxy ran across the room to a closet and opened the door and from one of the lower shelves she drew out a thick book and carried it to her table, opened it and turned the leaves carefully.

It was a wonderful book! On the very first page there was a picture of an amiable lion, with his family resting peacefully about him. On the next page were pictured a group of monkeys gathering cocoanuts, and further on were shown camels journeying across a desert; there were pictures of zebras, tigers, rhinoceros, and there were pages of wonderful birds with all their fine plumage.

Roxy turned to the page where a tall camel was pictured, and then taking one of the sheets of brown paper and a freshly sharpened pencil she began, very carefully, to draw the outlines of the strange animal. Its queer head, long legs and humped back were easy to copy, and with a little smile of satisfaction Roxy held up the drawing she had made, and then, scissors in hand, she cut carefully into the paper following her pencil marks until a paper camel lay on the table before her.

“There! Now I can cut out two or three more from this one!” she said aloud, and pulled open the lower drawer and placed the camel with a number of other animals cut from the brown paper. Later on Roxy planned to use all these paper figures in the “Paper Circus.”

It was Grandma Miller who had suggested, during a week of rainy days when Roxy and her mother had first arrived at the farm, that the little girl should begin it, and told her that when her mother was a small girl there was no game she enjoyed more. And Roxy's mother had brought out the "Animal Book" and shown Roxy how to trace the pictures.

Grandma Miller had explained that the animals were only a part of the circus; there would be a clown, who wore strange garments, men who must be mounted on prancing horses, and all could be assembled in a procession.

Grandma Miller knew just how to make the figures stand upright with clever little braces of stiff paper pasted on their backs; and Roxy's mother had suggested that Roxy could use her box of colored crayons to color the lion's mane, the stripes on the zebras, and to mark the eyes of the monkeys.

As Roxy added the camel to the pile of figures in the lower drawer she thought happily that her paper menagerie was now nearly complete.

"Then I'll cut out clowns and circus-men," she decided, "and then I can get ready to surprise Grandma," for Roxy was making a plan to

celebrate her grandmother's birthday, that came in mid-July, by an entertainment in which the "paper circus" was to have a prominent place. Polly had promised to help Roxy with this plan, and no one else was to be in the secret.

For the moment Roxy had nearly forgotten the adventures of the afternoon, but the sound of voices just outside the open windows made her jump up from the table and run toward the door.

"There's Polly!" she exclaimed. "Oh, I hope it's just as Dulcie said, and that the Yankee soldier did really escape."

Polly was on the front porch talking to Roxy's mother, and as Roxy appeared she saw that Polly was carrying the missing egg basket, and heard her explain that she had found it near a thicket of dogwood as she came up the slope.

CHAPTER IV

SIGNALS

“DAT Yankee sojer took de chicken, *an’* de bread, *an’* de eggs; an’ I’m right shuh dat some ob dose cakes were tuk!” declared Dulcie, as Mrs. Delfield handed her the basket.

“No, Dulcie! No, he didn’t!” exclaimed Roxy, who with Polly beside her had followed Mrs. Delfield to the open door of the kitchen.

Dulcie shook her head solemnly. “Den you tells me how cum dat basket whar he hides hisse’f? An’ you tells me likewise who did make off wid all my food?” and Dulcie gazed so sternly at Roxy that the little girl began to feel sure that her secret had been discovered.

“Of course the poor fellow must have been half starved,” said Grandma Miller, “but if he had only asked we would have gladly befriended him. I don’t like to think of any soldier slinking into a house in this fashion!”

“He didn’t! He didn’t!” again declared Roxy nearly ready to cry; for the little girl

realized that the young soldier need not have been so hungry, so nearly starved, as he had declared, if he had been willing to steal food; and Roxy felt it was unfair that he should be thought a thief when she herself had taken the things. She well knew that she would be praised for carrying him the food, but her promise to the fleeing stranger that she would never tell anyone that she had seen him now prevented her from protecting his honesty.

“Why, Roxy, dear! Who else could have taken the food? He must have crept in when Dulcie was in her cabin, and when you were riding with Polly,” said Mrs. Delfield, putting her arm about her little daughter and thinking Roxy had not yet wholly recovered from her fright.

Roxy looking up met Polly’s questioning glance. “Oh! Polly looks as if she knew all about it,” she thought, wondering if it could be possible; but neither of the girls said a word as to the fact of their disagreement or that Roxy had not, after all, gone to Sharpsburg that afternoon. Dulcie had apparently forgotten Roxy’s early return, and now reminded her mistress that supper-time was well past.

“Yo’ suppah am ready. Dar ain’ so much as dar ought ter be ’count ob dat Yankee a-stealin’ ob it; but I reckons you’ll make out,” she said soberly, and Grandma Miller led the way to the dining-room.

Polly declared that she had had her supper before leaving home, but she sat at the table beside Roxy and nibbled at one of Dulcie’s cakes.

Grandma Miller spoke again of the young soldier who had caused so much excitement in her quiet home.

“He is in safety by this time; with two good horses he can soon reach Washington. I wonder if it was the Richmond prison from which he escaped?” she said thoughtfully.

“My father thought the Confederates very brave to ride on so near to Sharpsburg in search of him,” said Polly; “he says they might easily have been captured themselves by some body of Union troops on the march.”

“Oh, no one ever questions the courage of the Southern soldiers; I should not be surprised to see an army of them, with General Robert Lee at their head, come riding into Maryland any day,” said Mrs. Delfield, but little imagining that before many months her prediction was to be ful-

filled, and the courageous Lee lead his brave troops to raise the standard of revolt on Northern soil, and that along those peaceful slopes and in the valley bordering the Antietam River would rage one of the fiercest and most decisive battles of the Civil War.

Nor could any one of the little group gathered that June evening about the table in the peaceful room whose windows looked off toward South Mountain imagine that the young Yankee soldier who Roxy had that day helped on his way to safety would be one of the conquering army under General McClellan.

Now and then Roxy and Polly exchanged a friendly smile, both well pleased that their disagreement of the early afternoon was forgotten, and when they left the dining-room and sauntered from the porch to the shade of a big butternut tree that stood a short distance from the house, leaving Grandma Miller and Roxy's mother, Mrs. Delfield said:

"I am so glad Polly and Roxy are such good friends. Polly is such a sweet-tempered, good girl."

"Indeed she is," agreed Grandma Miller, "and just the right companion for our impulsive

Roxy who has not yet learned to think first before acting on an impulse.”

“But the child’s impulses are all good ones,” replied Mrs. Delfield, “and I believe in letting her follow them.”

Grandma Miller smiled wisely. “All the more reason, my dear, for being glad that Roxy has Polly for her friend,” she said.

While this conversation went on the two girls under the butternut tree were making pleasant plans for the next day. Polly had made a wonderful discovery and was eager to share it with Roxy.

“Roxy, you know that from the end window in your chamber you can look straight across the fields and see the end windows of our attic,” she began. But Roxy shook her head.

“I can see the top of your house, but I don’t remember about windows,” she said thoughtfully.

“I’m sure you can,” Polly insisted, “because I looked out from our attic and I could see your window just as plain as could be; and the muslin curtain blew out, back and forth, while I was looking, just as if somebody was waving it,” and Polly smiled and nodded as if expecting Roxy to discover some particular meaning in the waving

curtain, but Roxy's gray eyes were fixed questioningly on her companion and she made no response.

"Oh, Roxy! What a little owl you are!" said Polly laughingly. "Don't you understand what the waving curtain means? Signals!" and at the last word, Polly's voice dropped to a whisper. But Roxy had sprung up, a little angry flush showing on her brown cheeks.

"I am not an 'owl,' Polly Lawrence," but before Polly could say a word Roxy had clasped the older girl's arm, and was saying: "Oh, Polly, I'll be an owl if you want me to. I don't know why I get mad so quickly!"

Polly put her arm about the little girl and said smilingly: "An owl is the wisest bird of all the birds, even if he can't see in the daytime!"

"Can't an owl see in daytime?" questioned Roxy. "Why can't he?"

But at this question Polly shook her head.

"You'll have to ask Grandma Miller; she knows all about birds," she answered. "What I meant, Roxy-poxy, was that you did not see what I was driving at about windows and curtains; if I can see your window-curtain from my attic windows why can't we have signals? If,

for instance, I promise to come over here and can't come I could fasten a white towel in my attic window; you would see it from your window and then you wouldn't expect me."

Roxy's face brightened with delight. "Oh, Polly! you think of the nicest things! Why, we can have a lot of signals, can't we?"

"Of course we can," Polly agreed; "we can have signals that mean 'come over this afternoon'; and a signal that means a ride or a walk."

Roxy was now all eagerness to carry out Polly's plan; and before Polly started for home the two girls had written out a set of "signals," to be carried out by white cloths fluttering from the upper windows of the Miller and Lawrence houses. Beside this Polly had suggested that on the following day they should go for a walk up the pasture slope beyond the Lawrence house.

"Maybe we can find a few late strawberries," said Polly; "and young wintergreen leaves are just right to gather now. Your grandma would like you to bring her home some of those."

"Yes, indeed! Will we meet by the big sycamore?" rejoined Roxy.

"Yes, I'll be there at ten o'clock," said Polly,

and Roxy, sure that nothing would prevent her being there at the time, agreed promptly.

The big sycamore was on the further slope from the Miller house that led up toward the Lawrence farm. It was a huge tree, that leaned protectively over a clear little brook that ran down the hills to empty into the Antietam, or as Dulcie called it, the "Anti-eatem" River. This tree was about half-way distant between the two places, and was a favorite meeting place for the two girls. There was a little hollow among the big roots well cushioned with soft, green moss where they often rested, and from this pleasant seat they could see two of the stone bridges that spanned the river.

After a few more words about their "signals," and deciding that they would keep it a secret, Polly said good-night and ran down the path, while Roxy walked slowly toward the house, thinking over all the wonderful events of the day.

The long June day had come to an end; the sun had set, and long rose-colored clouds lay along the western horizon; one faint star shone in the evening sky, and the fragrance of the white roses that grew about the porch filled the air with

sweetness. Mrs. Delfield was on the porch steps and as Roxy came toward her she heard her mother singing:

“For life or death, for woe or weal,
Thy peerless chivalry reveal,
And gird thy beauteous limbs with steel,
Maryland, my Maryland.”

As Roxy heard the words of the song she exclaimed:

“Oh, Mother! The soldiers in gray were singing that very tune.”

“Were they, dear? Well, perhaps all the South is singing it by this time,” said Mrs. Delfield, a little sorrowfully, for her Virginia cousins were in the Confederate Army while her husband and friends fought for the Union. The song “Maryland, my Maryland,” by James R. Randall, had been published the previous year, and its haunting cadences appealed to all.

“Mother! I hope the Yankee soldier is safe, don’t you?” said Roxy, as they went indoors.

“If he is he ought to be grateful to you, my dear,” replied Mrs. Delfield, and a little smile came over Roxy’s face. She thought it was a fine thing if she had really helped a Yankee sol-

dier to win his freedom and reach safety. But Roxy was not altogether happy as she remembered that she had permitted the young soldier to be thought a thief.

"I know he'd want me to tell now," she thought. "It isn't fair not to," and in a moment she was telling her mother the story of the afternoon: her anger toward Polly, the first meeting with the mounted soldiers on the bridge, and the hungry runaway's plea for help.

Mrs. Delfield listened in amazement.

"I had to tell, didn't I, Mother?" and her mother promptly agreed.

"Of course you did, dear child; and I think Grandma and Dulcie must be told at once so that they may know the young man did not take the food. You did just right, Roxy," and Mrs. Delfield smiled so approvingly that the little girl was no longer troubled, and went happily to bed with thoughts of all she would have to tell to Polly on the following day.

CHAPTER V

NEW ADVENTURES

DULCIE chuckled over the story of Roxy's carrying the food to the runaway, and Grandma Miller was well pleased that her little granddaughter had realized the importance of telling what had really occurred; and Roxy was now eager to tell Polly, who she was sure suspected the truth about who had secured the food for the hungry soldier.

"Polly didn't say anything about luncheon, but perhaps I'd better take something to eat in my basket?" Roxy suggested on the following morning, as she put on the wide-rimmed hat of rough straw, and went to the closet for the small covered basket that she often carried in her walks with Polly.

"Dar ain' no col' chicken, Missy," Dulcie reminded her, "but I reckon I kin fin' somt'in' ter gib you," and she took the basket and started for the pantry, and Roxy was confident the little basket would be well filled.

Roxy, basket in hand, trudged happily off across the pasture turning to wave a good-bye to Grandma Miller who stood on the side porch looking after her; a few minutes later the little girl was out of sight as she went down the slope toward the big sycamore.

A little cloud of yellow butterflies floated over her head and Roxy stopped to watch their wavering flight until they settled over a hedgerow of bittersweet. She had started in good season, and realized that she would reach the big sycamore long before Polly; so she lingered along her way, stopping to gather a bunch of the orange-colored blossoms of butterfly-weed, one of the most gorgeous of the wild flowers of Maryland.

The June morning was growing very warm and Roxy was glad to reach the shade of the wide-spreading branches of the sycamore, and taking off her hat she tucked the butterfly-weed blossoms under its ribbon band and gazed at them admiringly. "I wish Amy Fletcher could see them, and the blue mountains, and the bridges," she thought a little wistfully. For Amy Fletcher had lived next door to the Delfields in Newburyport, and the two little girls were fast friends, and Roxy often wrote to Amy telling her of all the

adventures that befell her among the hills of Maryland. "I guess Amy will think it is almost like a story when I write her about what happened yesterday," she thought, well pleased at having so real an adventure to describe; and at the sound of Polly's well-known call: "To-who-to-who!" she called back: "Who-to-who." Roxy smiled happily, thinking that no one except Polly and herself knew the real meaning of these calls. To any chance listener it would, the girls thought, mean the note of a bewildered young owl, but the first call: "To-who-to-who," really meant: "I'm on the way," while "Who-to-who" meant: "I am waiting."

Polly now came in sight, her red hair shining as the light flickered upon it.

"Oh, Polly! How can you go bareheaded when the sun is so hot?" was Roxy's greeting.

"I like it," replied Polly as she flung herself down on the soft moss beside her friend.

"Polly, you always look just right," declared the admiring Roxy as she touched the loose sleeve of Polly's tan-colored linen dress.

"If I look just right you talk just right, little Yank—I mean Roxy-poxy," responded Polly.

"You needn't have stopped at 'Yank,'" "

laughed Roxy. "I like it, since the soldier told me my father would be proud to be called Yankee. And I liked the tall soldier too, even if he did run after me. Oh, Polly! It was I who carried the basket of food to the runaway man!"

Polly's smile vanished, and her blue eyes regarded Roxy sternly. "And you let Dulcie call him a thief! And you let your grandmother think that he crept into her house and stole! I wouldn't have believed it," she said.

In a second Roxy was on her feet and had grabbed up her hat and basket.

"You are hateful, Polly Lawrence! Yes, you are! I don't care if you are handsome. I *couldn't* tell because I'd promised not to; but then I did tell because I knew I must! So there now!" exclaimed the angry girl, and without giving Polly a chance to speak she dashed off toward home.

But in a breath the long-legged Polly was after her and Roxy ran her best, resolved not to be overtaken. But Roxy's eyes were clouded by angry tears, and she stumbled over a trailing vine and went headlong, her basket flying in one direction and her hat in another, as the prickly

vines caught at her cotton dress and her outstretched hands were scratched and hurt by their thorns.

“Oh, Roxy! Roxy! I am so sorry,” exclaimed Polly, endeavoring to pull away the clutching vines and lift the little girl to her feet; but Roxy struggled against her, sobbing with pain and anger: “Go away! Go away!” until Polly could only stand back and let her alone.

“I am so sorry, Roxy! Do let me help you!” she pleaded, as Roxy now scrambled to her feet and looked about for her hat and basket. For the moment she did not notice her scratched hands and the long tear in her skirt.

Polly picked up the basket, whose contents had been saved by its cover from being spilled, and Roxy grabbed it from her before Polly could offer it, seized her hat from the thick growth of wild rose bushes where it had landed, and without a word or look toward Polly rushed down the path.

Polly stood watching her for a moment, and then with a little sigh turned toward home. She told herself that she was the one to blame; that she had been unfair to Roxy, and that Roxy was right in resenting her words.

“Roxy is only a little girl; I forget that I am nearly five years older than she is,” she thought, and resolved that in future she would be more careful and patient toward this little girl from far-off New England.

While Polly was making these resolutions Roxy had run down the path bordering the brook, hardly noticing the direction she had taken until she found herself beside a quiet pool where the brook widened. On the further side there was a thick growth of hazel-bushes, while the path ended at the edge of the pool, and just along the water’s edge beyond the path grew tall water-weeds and waving grass.

A willow-tree leaned over the water, and Roxy, hot, tired and angry, sat down in its shade and leaned her head against its rough trunk.

“Polly spoils everything!” she thought. “She spoiled my ride yesterday, and now she has spoiled to-day! Oh, dear,” and the little girl began to whimper unhappily.

But after she had bathed her hot face and scratched hands in the cool water, she began to feel less unhappy; and as she noticed her lunch basket a little smile crept over her face.

“I’m sure there are plum tarts in it,” she said

aloud. "Dulcie always makes plum tarts on Thursday mornings."

In order to find out Roxy lifted the cover of the basket, drew out the white napkin that was so carefully folded over the contents, and looked in.

"Yes, indeed! Two apiece!" she exclaimed.

"Well, Polly can't have even a taste!" she said, and helped herself to one of the flaky puffs that was well filled with delicious plum jelly. It was so good that Roxy promptly began on a second and had soon finished a third, then remembering that it was not yet the middle of the morning and, unless she went directly home, she would soon be hungry again, she reluctantly pushed the basket away, and now her unhappy thoughts about Polly again filled her mind.

"I wish there was another girl to play with," she thought a little mournfully, and suddenly exclaimed: "Oh! There are other girls! There's the three little Hinham girls! And their father asked me to come and see them. I'll go now!" And Roxy jumped up and seized her hat. "I guess it wouldn't look very polite to carry a lunch," she decided, and so ate the remaining plum tart and one of the spice-cookies.

“I’ll come after the basket on my way home,” she resolved, and turned back and crossed the pasture to the highway. She knew where the Hinham house stood, a low, rambling building with shabby barns, nearly a mile below the bridge where she had encountered the mounted soldiers, but she had never seen the three little girls whom she had now set out to visit; but their father had come to the Miller farm one day on business, and on seeing Roxy had said that he had three little girls and that Roxy must come and see them; and Grandma Miller had politely responded that she hoped the three little Hinham girls would come and visit Roxy.

As Roxy now trudged along the road, keeping on the shady side, she remembered this, and told herself that Grandma Miller would be pleased when she heard of the visit.

“Maybe I’ll ask the little Hinham girls to come to Grandma’s birthday party, and I can tell them about my paper circus. I guess Polly Lawrence will find I don’t have to play with her,” she thought, but somehow even the prospect of three new little girls as possible friends and playmates did not make Roxy wholly happy. The remembrance of Polly’s radiant smile, of the

plan of signalling from the upper windows, all the jokes they shared together and that no one else knew, crept into her mind and made the distance to the Hinham house seem very long, and when Roxy came in sight of the lane that led up to the farm buildings she was not only tired but very hot and thirsty.

“ Oh, dear! I hope they’ll ask me if I don’t want a drink of water,” she whispered to herself, as she left the highway and started up the lane.

But Roxy had gone only a little way when the sharp bark of a dog, quickly echoed by several others, made her stop suddenly and as she looked up the lane she saw a number of dogs come dashing toward her. Their barks sounded very threatening to the tired little girl, and for a moment Roxy was tempted to turn and run, but she was too tired, and she quickly remembered that these dogs must belong to the Hinhams and, as there were three little girls in the family, the dogs would not be surprised to see another little girl, so Roxy walked bravely on toward them.

CHAPTER VI

ROXY MAKES NEW FRIENDS

A SHARP whistle brought the dogs to a standstill, and Roxy saw a tall boy come hurrying toward her.

“ Lucky I was close by,” he muttered; “ those dogs don’t like strangers! Say!” and he smiled approvingly on Roxy. “ You had some courage to walk right along toward ’em! How’d you know they wouldn’t eat you up? ”

“ I guess I was too tired to run away,” confessed Roxy, and before she could say that she had come to visit the little Hinham girls the tall boy exclaimed:

“ I’ll bet you’re the little Yankee girl, ain’t you? ”

Roxy nodded. She was almost too tired to speak.

“ Well, we’re sure glad you came over,” the boy continued, his black eyes twinkling with friendliness as he clasped Roxy’s hand and led her up the rough lane.

“My name is Roland,” he announced, “Roland Hinham, and I’m the oldest of the family, nearly fifteen,” and he smiled again; and the tired Roxy thought the tall boy must be very good-natured; he seemed always smiling.

“My name is Roxana Elizabeth Delfield,” she responded, “and I’m ten years old.”

“You’re older than my sisters. Jasmine isn’t nine yet, and Myrtle is seven, and Ivy about five. They are all little girls,” replied Roland.

“What pretty names!” exclaimed Roxy admiringly, but before she could say anything more the three little Hinham girls came out on the porch of the house and stood looking at their brother and the little girl who clung to his hand.

“I’ve brought you a visitor,” Roland called, and in a moment Roxy found herself at the porch steps, and heard Roland say: “Jasmine, this is Miss Roxana Elizabeth Delfield, come to visit us,” and instantly the three little girls, each one of whom was dressed in a stiffly starched white muslin dress, made a curtsy to the newcomer and announced in soft musical voices: “We’re right pleased to see you,” and Jasmine, whose eyes and hair were as black as Roland’s, drew forward a small rush-bottomed rocking-chair and with a

smile as friendly as her brother's said: "Won't you sit down?" and Roxy, too tired to say a word in response, sank into the comfortable chair while the three dark-haired girls in their white dresses gathered about her, and looked at her a little wonderingly.

Roland had disappeared, and Roxy began to feel that she ought to explain her torn skirt. "I fell down and my skirt caught in some briars and tore," she said soberly, holding up the skirt of her pink cambric dress, and looking at it a little sorrowfully. "I guess my hands are not very clean," she continued apologetically, noticing how neat and trim were the little girls beside her.

Jasmine whispered to Myrtle who promptly ran indoors, followed by little Ivy, and Jasmine drew a chair close beside Roxy's and said softly:

"Did you hurt you when you fell?"

"Not much," replied Roxy, feeling an uncomfortable lump in her throat, and beginning to wish herself safely home in her own chamber where she could rest, "but I guess I'm tired. You see, I walked all the way from Grandma Miller's. Your father asked me to come," she explained.

Jasmine nodded. "He told us about you; we

were coming to see you as soon as our mother gets home from Sharpsburg," she said, and at the sound of approaching steps she turned toward the open door that led into a big cool room.

"Here's Nonny!" she exclaimed, and a young colored woman closely followed by Myrtle and Ivy came out on the porch carrying a small tray that held a blue pitcher and a lustre mug.

"Maybe you'd like a drink, Missy?" said the negro, and filling the glass with foamy milk handed it to Roxy who drank eagerly.

"Now if Missy'll jes' step in de house I'll fix dat skirt," suggested Nonny, and with Jasmine close beside her Roxy went in, and followed Nonny up a broad flight of stairs to a pleasant chamber, where Jasmine and Nonny quickly persuaded her to slip off the torn dress and take off her shoes and stockings.

Nonny bathed Roxy's tired feet, as well as her face and hands, brushed out the tangles of the wavy brown hair, and Roxy, curled up in a big cushioned chair, with her three new friends gathered around her while Nonny carried off the pink dress to press out its wrinkles, began to be well pleased that she had decided to visit the Hinham family.

Little Ivy had brought a family of dolls to entertain the unexpected guest; Myrtle had opened the lower drawer of the bureau and taken out her fine new leghorn hat trimmed with a wreath of pink rosebuds for Roxy to admire, while Jasmine sat close beside her new friend, watching Roxy with admiring eyes.

“Your hair is so pretty,” Jasmine declared; “it has little waves all through it, and you have a dimple in your chin, just as Ivy has.”

This was very pleasant to Roxy, and when Nonny brought back the pink cambric dress, neatly mended and pressed, and she found herself being led down-stairs to luncheon Roxy had almost forgotten her quarrel with Polly Lawrence, and was thoroughly enjoying herself.

“Father is away so Roland is taking care of things!” said Jasmine, as Nonny said luncheon was waiting, and Roland came into the dining-room and lifted Ivy to her seat at the table.

Roxy was sure it was the best luncheon that she had ever eaten: the golden omelette, the delicious cold ham and creamed potatoes, the early peas, the plum jam and hot biscuit, and the glass of cool milk were all delicious to the hungry girl,

and she did not give a thought to the basket she had left beneath the sycamore.

After luncheon Jasmine was eager for Roxy to try their swing under the big oak tree, and Roland was ready to send them swinging through the air until they declared themselves tired. Roland listened gravely when Roxy told of the two Confederate soldiers whom she had encountered on the previous day. Roland knew well that the Union Army of the Potomac was making preparations for its grand assault on Richmond; he had heard his father declare that at any time Union and Confederate forces might meet on Maryland soil and a serious battle ensue; and as Roxy told of the fleeing Union soldier and the pursuing Confederates the boy wondered if the Southern Army might not be planning to enter Maryland.

But Jasmine was greatly excited over her friend's adventure.

"Why, it was really you, Roxy, who helped the man escape!" she declared, looking at her new friend with admiring eyes. "What do you s'pose his name was?" she added thoughtfully.

Roxy shook her head. "I didn't think about his name," she replied.

“Maybe it was the Richmond prison from which he escaped,” suggested Roland, but Myrtle had begun to sing and Roxy was listening so eagerly that for the moment she entirely forgot the Yankee soldier.

“A-swinging, a-swinging,
Under a rose-tree swinging—
I saw a green fairy
Who wore a gold crown.
I heard fairy bells ringing,
And fairies were singing,
And dancing and bringing
Fairy honey to the one
Who wore the gold crown!”

As Myrtle sang she danced about the swing, followed by little Ivy; and in a moment Jasmine laughingly followed, all three of the girls joining in the song as they circled about the swing where Roxy sat smiling delightedly.

“Sing some more!” she exclaimed, as she left the swing and danced on behind the others, and Jasmine nodded, and began:

“Every leaf on every bough
Dances now, dances now.”

As the girls danced they bowed to the left and

right, with graceful movements that Roxy endeavored to imitate, and the group made a pretty picture.

Roland had returned to his work, and when the girls tired of dancing Myrtle suggested that perhaps Roxy would like to see the flock of bantams, and led the way to the group of farm buildings at some distance from the house where Roxy exclaimed over the tiny bantam chickens.

“You can have a pair if you want them,” said Myrtle. “When we come over to see you we’ll bring you a pair,” she promised.

Roxy’s face flushed with pleasure as she thanked her new friend; and when they all wandered to the pasture that Roxy might see the three gray ponies that belonged to the little Hinham girls Roxy told herself that Jasmine and Myrtle and Ivy were the most fortunate girls in the world.

“You have everything,” she declared admiringly, as they returned to the shady porch where Nonny promptly brought them glasses of raspberry shrub and tiny frosted cakes.

“Yes, indeed!” said Jasmine, and Myrtle and Ivy both nodded and smiled. They felt rather

sorry for their visitor because she did not have a brother like Roland and small sisters to play with.

The tall clock in the front room struck four, and, with a little exclamation of surprise, Roxy said she must at once start for home.

“Roland is going to drive you over; he said he would,” Jasmine told her, and in a short time the two gray ponies harnessed to a pretty basket-phaeton trotted up to the porch and Roland helped Roxy to a seat beside him, while Jasmine, Myrtle and Ivy all promised to return her visit as soon as their mother came home.

“It’s the nicest visit I ever had!” Roxy called back to them, as the ponies trotted briskly off toward the highway.

CHAPTER VII

A RAINY DAY

“IF you please I will get out at the bridge,” Roxy had told Roland, as the gray ponies trotted swiftly over the road that had seemed so endless a distance to Roxy only a few hours earlier. “I left a basket near the brook, and I can go home across the pasture,” she explained; and at the bridge Roland bade her good-bye, promising that his sisters would soon return her visit.

Roxy found her basket, and now hurried up the slope eager to tell her mother about the three little girls with such beautiful names: “Jasmine, Myrtle, Ivy,” and Roxy repeated them over admiringly. Then the swing under the apple trees, the bantam chickens! But suddenly Roxy’s happy smile vanished as she remembered that she would have to explain how she happened to leave Polly and walk the long distance to visit three little girls whom she had never seen.

And now Roxy remembered something even more important, and exclaimed aloud:

“ I promised Grandma not to go beyond the bridge unless someone was with me! ” And at the remembrance of this Roxy sank down on the hillside.

“ How could I forget it! ” she whispered. “ And what will Grandma say? Oh, I can’t tell her! ” And now Roxy instantly resolved to say nothing of her visit to the Hinham girls or of her running away from Polly.

“ I’ll wait and tell Mother first, ” she thought, and now went soberly on toward the house, stopping to empty her lunch basket for the benefit of a flock of chickens that were running about the slope.

It was now late in the afternoon, but no anxiety had been felt over Roxy’s absence. Believing her to be with Polly Lawrence, Mrs. Delfield had not been troubled, and when she saw Roxy coming slowly up the slope came to the door to welcome her; but before Roxy had reached the house one of the negro field-hands was seen running across the yard and Roxy heard him call out:

“ Sojers! Sojers! A’ army, Missus! Marchin’ down de road! ” and the little girl turned and looked eagerly toward the highway and saw a group of mounted soldiers, in blue uniforms, as

they rode swiftly down the road that led toward Harper's Ferry.

It was the 27th of June, 1862, and on that very day General Lee had driven the Union forces under General Porter across the Chickahominy, putting General McClellan on the defensive, and creating alarm as to the security of Washington; and the little group of Union soldiers that Roxy now watched so eagerly were riding to join McClellan's forces that were so soon to prove their unfaltering courage on the field of battle.

"My lan'! Ain' we be'n seein' sojers all de spring!" declared Dulcie. "'Tain' no great sight on dese roads; an' so long as de blue coats don' run 'cross de gray coats I guess 'tain' much 'count! But jes' s'pose dey happens to meet up wid one 'nudder some day long de Anti-eatem!" and Dulcie shook her head solemnly, as Roxy stood on the porch looking after the soldiers.

But the passing of the "blue coats" had reminded Mrs. Delfield and her mother of how near they were to the scenes of the great conflict, and their faces grew sad as they spoke of the threatening advance of Jackson's Confederate army in the Shenandoah Valley, of the recent battle at

Fair Oaks, and of the new Commander-in-Chief of the Southern forces, General Robert E. Lee, an officer honored by every American, and fitted for the greatest command.

Talking of these things they paid but little attention to Roxy, who went slowly up to her chamber and kneeling down on the window-seat looked off wistfully toward the Lawrence farm, and began to wish that she was on the old friendly terms with Polly Lawrence.

“Perhaps Polly is looking over this way now. I wish we had thought of a signal that meant ‘I’m sorry,’” and Roxy sighed deeply. Then she sprang up and ran to the corner of the room, seized a towel and hurried back to the window. She leaned out and waved it, and then fastened it to the green wooden shutter.

“That means ‘Come over the minute you see this,’ and Polly will come. I’m sure she will. Polly never stays angry,” thought Roxy, and when her mother called her to supper she ran down sure that her quarrel with Polly was over.

But it was hard for Roxy not to speak of all that had happened, and she was so quiet at supper, so ready to go to bed at an early hour that

her mother thought she must be tired out by the long day wandering about with Polly.

The next morning Roxy was awake at an early hour. She could hear the sleepy notes of nesting birds in the trees near the house, and the voices of the negro farm-hands as they started off to the fields. Her first waking thought was the "signal," and in a moment she was out of bed running to the open window.

"There it is! There it is!" she whispered joyfully, as she saw the white signals fluttering from the attic window of Polly's home.

"That means that Polly will come over as soon as she can," Roxy thought happily, and when her mother came in at the usual hour she found Roxy dressed and ready for breakfast.

She had put on a fresh gingham dress, and now remembered the torn pink cambric. For a moment she wondered what her mother would say to the neat stitches that Nonny had set, but the sound of horses' hoofs in the yard sent her flying to the window and at the sight of Polly on horseback she forgot all about the pink dress and ran down the stairs and out to meet her friend.

Polly smiled down at the little girl and said quickly:

"Everything all right, Roxy? Or did you want me for something special?"

"Just to be friends!" said Roxy soberly. "Can you not come in to breakfast, Polly? Do!" she pleaded, and Polly instantly slipped from the saddle and said:

"I told Mother I might spend the day, for it is cloudy all along the mountains and that means rain; and it will be just the day to work on your circus."

A negro boy led the brown horse to the stable and Polly and Roxy went in the house.

"Polly's going to spend the day," Roxy announced, and her visitor was warmly welcomed, and Dulcie brought in plates of steaming waffles, and Polly declared that Mrs. Miller's bees made the best honey in Maryland as she accepted a liberal helping.

Before breakfast was over it had begun to rain.

"A fine day to put my quilt into the frames," declared Grandma Miller, "and Roxy can have her first lesson in quilting; there'll be time for your paper animals this afternoon."

"Yes, indeed!" Roxy eagerly agreed, "and may I help you mark the pattern, Grandma?"

Grandma Miller nodded. "I think we'll mark

a 'Rising Sun,' " she said thoughtfully; and as Dulcie now brought the wooden quilting frames into the dining-room, and Mrs. Miller started upstairs for the bed-quilt she had pieced of bits of gingham, calico and cambric, the two girls looked at each other smilingly.

"It will be fun to help quilt," Polly said, and Roxy watched her admiringly as she helped Mrs. Miller and Dulcie fasten the pretty quilt to the frames, that rested on the backs of four straight-backed chairs.

"Now for the 'Rising Sun,' " said Grandma, who held a ball of twine which she began to rub with white chalk. "Polly, fasten the end of this twine in that corner," she directed, and Polly promptly obeyed. "You shall 'snap' the chalked twine, Roxy," Grandma Miller continued, as she drew the twine cornerwise across the quilt, and in a few moments Roxy was running from one side of the quilt to the other, "snapping" the taut chalked twine as Grandma directed, and which left white lines behind each "snap." These lines ran from the corners and sides of the quilt to the centre, and made a pattern known as the "Rising Sun."

When the marking was finished a thimble was

found for Polly and she took her seat beside Mrs. Delfield on one side of the quilt, while Grandma Miller and Roxy were seated on the other side, and Roxy's first lesson in quilting began.

“Put your left hand under the quilt, my dear; now take as small stitches as you can directly along the chalk-line,” said Grandma, and Roxy began, thinking this was even more fun than cutting out paper animals. But Mrs. Delfield did not let the girls “quilt” long. She knew that Roxy's arms would easily tire, and in a little while she asked Roxy and Polly if they would not like to go to the kitchen and ask Dulcie to make a honey-cake for dinner, and the girls were quite ready to do this.

“Can't we help make the cake, Dulcie?” asked Polly, and Dulcie nodded.

“I reckons yo' can. De eggs has to be beat consid'bul fer honey-cake. Firs' de whites has ter be all ob a foam, an' den de yolks has ter be smoof as silk, an' den yo' has ter beat de butter so's it mo' like honey dan butter, an' den ——”

“Oh, Dulcie! Let me beat the whites! They bubble up so much like soap-bubbles,” said Roxy, and Dulcie brought out the egg basket and two big yellow bowls.

“Jes’ fetch two ob de biggest silver spoons, Miss Roxy. I don’ mak’ no cake wid common spoon,” she said, beginning to break the eggs, while the girls hastened to bring the spoons.

The big kitchen was a pleasant place that morning, and while Roxy and Polly beat the eggs and creamed the butter for the honey-cake Dulcie prepared vegetables and a chicken pie for the midday meal, and at last declared herself ready to “mix up de cake.”

“I can hardly wait to taste it,” Roxy said, as she watched Dulcie set the cake in the oven.

Before it was taken out Mrs. Miller and Roxy’s mother called the girls to come and help them roll up the quilt on its frames and set it in the hall.

“By the time you are ready for dinner the cake will be baked,” said Grandma, as the two girls ran up-stairs to brush their hair and wash their hands.

“We will work on the ‘Circus’ after dinner,” said Polly. “It is only two weeks before your Grandma’s birthday, and there is a lot to do before the ‘Circus’ will be finished.”

“Polly! I know who I’ll ask to come to my ‘surprise’ for Grandma. I’ll ask the little

Hinham girls and their brother!" said Roxy eagerly. "Don't you think their names are lovely?"

"Yes," responded Polly, wondering a little how it was that Roxy knew the names of the little Hinham girls. "Have they been over to see you?" she asked.

Roxy shook her head. She wanted to tell Polly all about her visit, but felt a little ashamed because she had started off so angry at Polly. Dulcie's voice calling them to dinner sent them hurrying down-stairs, and Polly asked no more questions.

After dinner the rain gradually ceased, and the two girls, sitting by Roxy's table near the front window, were so busy with scissors and water-color paints, and with their plan for a birthday surprise party for Grandma Miller that they did not think about the weather until Polly suddenly jumped up and said:

"Roxy—Roxy! Here's the sun shining, and the day nearly over. I must be off!" and with Roxy running beside her Polly started for the yard to ask one of the negro boys to saddle "Brownie."

"I'm glad it rained!" said Roxy, as Polly

swung herself to the saddle. "And our signals are splendid, aren't they, Polly?"

"Splendid!" replied Polly, and with a smiling good-bye she sent "Brownie" off at a swift trot, and Roxy stood looking after her.

"Nobody, no other girl, is like Polly," she thought, remembering Polly's unfailing good nature. "Maybe it's because she is almost grown up." And then Roxy's smile vanished. A whole day had passed and she had not yet found courage to tell her mother that she had forgotten about her promise not to go beyond the bridge, and had visited three little girls without being invited!

"I guess I had better tell her now!" Roxy decided. "It isn't going to be any easier to wait," and she went slowly toward the front porch where her mother and grandmother were sitting.

CHAPTER VIII

FOLLOWING THE BROOK

“AND when are the little Hinham girls coming to visit you?” asked Grandma Miller, as Roxy finished her story.

“I think we could have a swing fixed on that big branch of the butternut tree,” said Roxy’s mother thoughtfully, for Roxy had described the swing as one of the chief delights of the visit with her new friends.

The little girl, leaning against the arm of her mother’s chair, looked wonderingly from her mother to her grandmother. Neither of them had said a word of blame; and Grandma Miller even nodded and smiled when Roxy had explained that she did not remember her promise about not going beyond the bridge.

“Of course you forgot it, my dear, or you would not have gone,” she said, and Roxy gave a sigh of relief.

“Oh, I am glad it isn’t a secret any longer.



THE LITTLE GIRL LOOKED FROM HER MOTHER TO HER
GRANDMOTHER

I'll tell Polly to-morrow!" she exclaimed, as her mother drew her down into her lap.

Then there was a little more talk about the swing, and Roxy told her mother about the tiny bantam chickens, and that Roland had brought her as far as the bridge with the gray ponies. "I won't forget about the bridge again," she declared earnestly, and her mother said:

"No one means to forget a promise; but we must think of some way to remind you of this one."

"I know a way!" declared Grandma Miller. "Just wait a moment," and she went briskly across the porch into the house.

"What way do you suppose Grandma means?" questioned Roxy; but her mother declared that she could not imagine. "Unless Grandma means to tie a very long string to you," and at this Roxy laughed happily.

"Here is something, Roxy, that will make you remember not to go beyond the bridge, and to keep whatever promise you make! Hold out your left hand," said Grandma Miller, and Roxy promptly obeyed, and Grandma slipped a gold ring on the little girl's forefinger. "It just fits!" she said smilingly. "I thought it would!

Now, Roxana," and Grandma Miller's voice grew serious, "whenever you look at that ring remember that it means a number of things: first of all it means: keep a promise; and besides that it means keep your temper; it is always a silly thing to get angry."

"Yes'm! It's a lovely ring!" said Roxy, sliding from her mother's lap, and standing close beside Grandma Miller. "I've wanted a ring, and this is so pretty!" and she held out her hand and looked admiringly at the gold ring with its chased pattern of roses. "Thank you, Grandma; I couldn't forget now," she added; and when a little later she went up-stairs she again fastened the white signal, meaning "Come over as soon as you can," to the green shutter, and went happily to bed eager for the morning to come when she could tell Polly about the Hinham girls and show her this wonderful ring that was to help Roxy remember her promises and keep her temper.

Polly appeared in good season the next morning, and listened smilingly to the story of Roxy's visit, admired the pretty chased ring, and asked Mrs. Delfield's permission to take Roxy on a fishing excursion.

“ I have brought a luncheon, and we will be home early in the afternoon,” she promised, and in a little while Roxy was ready to start, and the two girls went off across the pasture toward the brook.

“ Roxy, why don’t you have your ‘circus’ party under the big sycamore? It would be a splendid place. We could fix up a tent close by, just like a real circus, and have a picnic dinner, and plan it all without your grandma guessing a word about it!” suggested Polly, as they came in sight of the big tree.

Roxy eagerly agreed, and Polly pointed out a fine place for a tent, and said she was sure that her father would help them put it up.

Then they followed the brook on up the slope and came to a thick growth of hazelwood, where Polly stopped to cut a couple of hazel-rods.

“ I have some white moths for bait, and some fishing-lines; and there are always trout in this stream,” she told Roxy. “ We’ll have to keep quiet, though, when we begin to fish.”

Roxy smiled happily. Polly had long promised her this fishing excursion, and she was now sure that it was going to be a wonderful day.

“ We’ll build a fire and cook the trout, won’t

we, Polly?" she said, and Polly promised, and began singing:

"I went into the hazelwood,
Because a plan was in my head,
To cut and peel a hazel-rod,
And put a berry on a thread.

"And when the birds are on the wing,
And flowers, like stars, are shining out,
I'll drop the berry in the stream,
And catch a little silver trout."

Roxy stood watching Polly and listened eagerly. "I wish I could sing that, Polly," she said.

"Try!" responded Polly; and she slowly sang the first words over and Roxy repeated them, so that by the time the hazel-rods were cut and trimmed and Polly had fastened the lines, both the girls were singing the old song.

Then they made their way to the brook, and swung their lines into the clear water and in a short time Polly had caught "a little silver trout," and almost at the same moment there was a pull on Roxy's line and she, too, had caught a fine speckled trout.

It was Polly who re-baited their hooks, and

when they each had landed another fish declared they had enough.

“We’ll find a good place for a fire and cook them,” she said, and Roxy was quite ready to do this. The shining gold ring on her forefinger made her resolve that she would do whatever Polly wanted to do, and she was sure that she would never again be angry at Polly.

The rough pasture slope had many places where a fire could safely be lighted, and they selected the shady side of a towering ledge and Polly built up a three-sided oven of flat stones with another flat stone on top on which she put the trout. Then the fire was started and carefully watched; the fish were cautiously turned from time to time and when Polly declared them nearly cooked the fire was allowed to die.

Polly’s lunch basket was well filled. There were cream-of-tartar biscuits, ginger-cakes, a tumbler of strawberry-jam, and a bottle of milk, and the two girls feasted happily. But Roxy could not forget the plum tarts she had so selfishly devoured, and she resolved to ask Dulcie to make some specially for Polly.

The two friends now made further plans for Roxy’s circus.

“ You must ask Mr. Greaves, Roxy, because he is the minister, and Mrs. Greaves is your grandma’s best friend,” said Polly. “ You and I will take ‘ Brownie ’ and drive about and ask whoever you want.”

“ All the Hinhams,” said Roxy promptly.

“ Of course,” Polly agreed.

“ And you and your father and mother,” continued Roxy.

Polly nodded.

“ And who else? ” questioned Roxy, adding quickly: “ I do wish my father could come.”

“ Perhaps he will,” responded Polly, “ but I think with the Hinhams and Mr. and Mrs. Greaves it will be a real party. Where is your father, Roxy? ”

Roxy’s face grew sober. “ We don’t know,” she replied. “ Mother thinks he may be with General Pope near Culpepper, and she is hoping to hear any day that he can come and see us.”

Polly made no reply; she had heard her father say, that very morning, that news had come that Confederate soldiers commanded by General Jackson were advancing against General Pope, and that a battle might follow. Polly knew that the city of Washington was believed to be in

danger of an attack by the Confederates, but she did not speak of this to Roxy.

“Do you suppose the Yankee boy that I found is safe now?” Roxy questioned, and Polly assured her that the young soldier must have reached the Union lines.

“When your father comes you can tell him how you helped a Yankee soldier,” said Polly; “it isn’t every girl who has a chance. I wish I could do something.”

“Well, Polly, perhaps you can. Grandma says that maybe the war may come right into Maryland,” Roxy replied, and the two girls looked at each other with sober faces; for even ten-year-old Roxy realized that the approach of a battle between Northern and Southern troops was indeed a terrible thing.

“I promised to come home early,” said Polly, “so we had better start;” and, making sure that the fire was out, the two girls started across the pasture toward the big sycamore where they bade each other good-bye.

“I’ll stop for you about three to-morrow afternoon, and we will drive over and invite Mr. and Mrs. Greaves,” said Polly.

“Yes, and the Hinhams,” agreed Roxy, smil-

ing at the thought of the party under the big sycamore.

As she followed the brook a short distance on her way toward home, her thoughts were of all that must be done to make the "circus" complete. She resolved to spend the rest of the afternoon in arranging the paper animals, and cutting out the ones that were not yet ready.

But as she went through the opening in the wall and looked up toward the house she gave a little exclamation of surprise and entirely forgot about Grandmother Miller's birthday surprise as she ran up the slope; for there were the gray ponies and phaeton standing in the yard, and on the porch she could see the three small girls in white dresses and a tall boy talking to her mother.

"The Hinhams! The Hinhams!" she whispered happily, and ran swiftly toward the house eager to welcome them.

CHAPTER IX

UNDER THE SYCAMORE

THE Hinham girls had brought the pair of bantams they promised Roxy, and Dulcie took charge of them with many exclamations of admiration and approval, as much pleased as Roxy herself, and said they should have a yard and house to themselves not too far from the kitchen for her to keep an eye on them.

Roxy, looking admiringly at the white dresses of her little visitors, again decided that Jasmine and Myrtle and Ivy were the prettiest little girls she had ever seen.

“Our mother came home from Sharpsburg this morning, and she brought each one of us a ring!” said the smiling Jasmine, and each of the sisters held out their left hand; on each tiny forefinger shone a chased gold ring.

“Oh! And my grandmother gave me one yesterday! Look!” exclaimed the delighted Roxy; and when it was discovered that her ring was exactly the same pattern as Jasmine’s, Grandma

Miller smilingly explained it by saying that she had purchased Roxy's ring in Sharpsburg, and that probably all the rings came from the same shop.

"There's a secret about our rings," Jasmine whispered to Roxy. "Every time we look at them we are to remember something."

"And I have to remember something every time I look at mine!" declared Roxy, wishing that she knew what Jasmine's secret was. The two girls smiled at each other thinking it very remarkable that not only their rings were alike but that each of them had a secret.

"Perhaps some day you can tell me what your ring means," suggested Roxy. "I'd just as soon tell you that Grandmother gave me my ring so I would remember to keep promises and not to get angry. You see," Roxy continued soberly, "I get angry before I know it," and she looked at Jasmine as if expecting her new friend to be greatly surprised; but Jasmine nodded and smiled as if she had heard the best of news.

"Oh, Roxy! That's just what I do!" she confessed, and at this they both began laughing so that Myrtle and Ivy ran toward them to know

what the fun was about. But the two older girls decided to keep this for their special secret.

While the little girls amused themselves Roland had been telling Mrs. Delfield of the news that his mother and father had brought from Sharpsburg: of the battle of Malvern Hill where General McClellan had repulsed an attack by the Confederates.

“General Lee retreated toward Richmond,” said Roland, “and my father said there were rumors that General Lee might march on to Washington.”

“That would mean bringing the war into Maryland,” responded Mrs. Delfield, and Roxy wondered if that would not mean also that her father would come.

Roland said it was time for them to start for home, and no more was said of war. Roxy found a chance to tell Jasmine something of the birthday party as she bade her good-bye, and promised to see her on the following day.

As Roxy stood looking after the phaeton she happened to glance down and exclaimed:

“Oh! My dress is all gray and my stockings too!” and she suddenly realized that her blue-checked gingham was dirty, that her hair was un-

tidy, and that it was the second time the little Hinham girls had seen her in that condition. "And they are always in perfectly clean white dresses, and look just right," she whispered to herself, and now made a resolve that the next time the little Hinham girls saw her she would be as neatly dressed as it was possible for a girl to be.

Mr. and Mrs. Greaves and the Hinhams all accepted Roxy's invitation to come to the surprise party for Grandmother Miller's birthday, and Polly's mother and father also promised to attend, and for the week following the fishing excursion Roxy was very busy. Mrs. Delfield and Dulcie were taken into the secret, and if Grandma Miller sometimes wondered at Dulcie's chuckles and mysterious nods and winks over her cake-baking she did not really imagine the reason.

Every day Roxy was busy from early morning until late in the afternoon, either at work with scissors and water-color paints, or running down to the big sycamore to plan just where the tent should stand, and decide on the best place for Grandma Miller.

"There ought to be a special seat for Grandma," she said on the day before the party,

as she and her mother walked up the path to the sycamore.

“Of course,” Mrs. Delfield agreed; “and if it was right here against the tree she could see the guests as they came up the path and be ready to welcome them. We could make a seat of moss.”

“So we could!” exclaimed Roxy. “There’s quantities of nice gray moss along the ledges and under the beech trees! Can’t we make it now, Mother?”

“Of course we can,” said Mrs. Delfield, and they at once started off up the pasture slope and gathered armfuls of the clean gray moss from the ledges and under the beech trees and heaped it up to make a comfortable seat under the sycamore; and when they had finished Roxy felt she could hardly wait for the next morning to come when Polly and her father were to put up a small white tent for the circus.

The morning of July twentieth was clear and pleasant, and Roxy was up at an early hour and ran to her grandma’s room to wish her a happy birthday. At breakfast time Mrs. Delfield gave her mother a pretty lace collar, and Roxy presented her with a frilled white apron that she had made, and Mrs. Miller declared that it was

the happiest birthday breakfast she had ever had.

“But I can’t imagine what ails Dulcie this morning,” she said. “She has been talking to herself and chuckling as if something wonderful was about to happen!”

It was difficult for Roxy to keep quiet, and as soon as breakfast was over she ran up to her room for the boxes that held the paper animals and then hurried off toward the sycamore where she found Polly and Mr. Lawrence awaiting her. Mr. Lawrence had brought the white canvas tent and set it up on the smooth field just beyond the big tree.

It was not a very large tent, and the girls decided to leave one side open.

“Then everyone can see in,” said Roxy. Mr. Lawrence set two flat boxes at the closed end of the tent, and Polly and Roxy brought ferns and wild flowers and fastened them over the rough sides and ends, leaving the tops of the boxes uncovered; for the paper animals were to be set out in a “procession.”

After Mr. Lawrence had set the boxes in the tent he bade the girls good-bye, promising to return in the afternoon, and now Roxy and Polly

set to work on the circus that was to entertain Grandmother Miller and her birthday guests.

The big elephants were to lead the procession, and following these came four camels, several lions and tigers, zebras, a number of ostrich, and then a group of monkeys. Beside all these Roxy had cut out and colored several parrots, a bird of paradise and two peacocks with wide-spreading tails.

“We might fix a tree for the birds,” suggested Polly; and they made a fairy-like tree from the stout green brakes that grew near the brook. On the top of this tree they fixed the parrots, while the peacocks were placed at the foot.

When it was all arranged the circus made a very attractive sight, and the two girls gazed at it admiringly.

“Roxy! It would be a good idea for you to dress up and be the manager of the show, and tell where all the animals were captured. That ‘Animal Book’ tells, doesn’t it?” said Polly, her blue eyes eager at the thought of an added interest for Roxy’s “circus.”

Roxy jumped about, delighted at this suggestion.

“What will I dress up in, Polly?” she asked.

For a moment Polly did not answer; then she said:

“There are some things in our attic that will be just what we want. There is a tall white hat, and a long blue coat with big brass buttons! And, Roxy! We can make whiskers and a moustache for you out of yarn and tie them on. Then you must have a long stick and stand here,” and Polly placed herself at one end of the procession of animals, “and you must begin like this: ‘Ladies and gentlemen. First come the largest elephants in the world. I captured them in Africa ——’”

“Oh, Polly! Polly!” shouted Roxy, hardly able to speak because of laughter, “that will be splendid.”

“You must be serious and not laugh, remember!” Polly warned her. “I’ll go home now and get the things. We must have everything ready by three o’clock.”

It was nearly noon when Roxy returned home and whispered to Dulcie that she must be sure to have the birthday cake at the big sycamore by four o’clock, and Dulcie chuckling with delight promised to be in good time.

As soon as dinner was over Mrs. Delfield re-

minded her mother that they were to go for a drive, and had better start at once; and Mrs. Miller was surprised to find that her white horse was already harnessed to the tall buggy and at the door, and with a smiling word to Roxy, Mrs. Delfield helped her mother into the carriage and they drove off.

And now Roxy ran up to her own room quickly followed by Dulcie with a big pitcher of hot water.

“W’ile yo’ is a bathin’ I’ll fetch yo’ white muslin dress. De ruffles all sets out as fine as kin be,” said Dulcie.

“And bring my bronze slippers and blue sash,” called Roxy, for she was resolved that to-day the little Hinham girls should see her in a dress as white as their own.

“Of course I’ll have to cover it all up for the circus, but when they come they’ll see me looking just as nice as they look themselves,” she thought, as she brushed her wavy brown hair until it crinkled and shone, and when Dulcie had tied it with a wide blue ribbon and fastened Roxy’s sash she exclaimed admiringly:

“Yo’ suttin’ly do look fine, Missy Roxy. Yo’ looks jes’ as if yo’ might a bin born in Marylan’!

Yo' sho' does!" And Dulcie was sure no one could expect or receive higher praise than this. "Now step keerful, chile!" she warned the little girl, as Roxy put on a pretty leghorn hat trimmed with blue flowers, and started off for the sycamore.

Mrs. Delfield had promised to bring Grandma Miller to the big tree at exactly three o'clock, and at that time everything was in readiness.

The guests had been told to follow the path leading from the stone bridge beside the brook, and Polly, wearing a blue dimity dress with white collar and sash, and Roxy were ready to meet and welcome them and lead them to the seat where Grandma Miller would receive them.

The guests, however, all arrived before Grandma Miller; and when Roxy led her up the path followed by Mrs. Delfield and Polly, and the smiling group greeted her with a chorus of "Happy birthday," she was as much surprised as Roxy had expected her to be, and seated herself on the cushion-like moss declaring that it was well worth while to be sixty years old to have so glorious a birthday.

The tent was behind the tree and had not been noticed by anyone but Roland, and when Roxy

and Polly suddenly disappeared Roland was the only one who suspected that a real surprise was in store for the members of the birthday party.

It was Polly who announced the "circus." Making a pretty curtsy to Mrs. Miller and then to the guests, she said:

"In honor of Mrs. Miller's birthday I have the pleasure of announcing that Signor Delroxana has brought his menagerie of trained beasts and birds. If you will kindly follow me," and taking Grandma Miller by the hand Polly led the way to the open tent where a strange little figure in a tall white hat, a blue coat that trailed on the ground, and whose face was nearly covered with a beard of curly brown yarn, stood ready to introduce the animals and tell of their capture in far-off lands.

Roxy did not laugh once, as in a gruff voice she named each group of animals and birds; but her listeners found it difficult to keep quiet, and Roland whispered to his mother that it was the funniest thing he had ever seen, and the minister said it was very instructive as well as amusing, while Grandma Miller laughed until she had to wipe the tears from her eyes.

Dulcie, standing near the little Hinham girls, was the only sober person in the audience.

“Dat ruffle-muslin; I reckon’s it look like a rag ’fore dis! My lan’! Wot good fer Missy Roxy to kiver up her fine clo’es dis way,” she muttered disapprovingly.

After Roxy had finished and taken off the coat, hat and whiskers, her grandmother said that her little granddaughter must sit beside her on the fine seat of moss; and Dulcie brought the huge birthday cake which Grandma cut, and Roxy was delighted to carry the plates to the smiling guests who were gathered in the shade of the big sycamore. There were pitchers filled with raspberry shrub, and various sorts of tempting cakes handed about by a smiling negro girl who had come to help Dulcie; and when Roxy saw the abundance of plum tarts, exactly like the ones she had eaten on the day she had quarrelled with Polly, she smiled happily, and felt that nothing was lacking.

It was sunset before the guests started for home, and as Roxy, hand in hand with Grandma Miller, walked up the slope toward home she thought it had been the happiest day she remembered.

“Everybody had a good time, didn’t they,

Grandma?" she asked eagerly, as they sat down on the porch.

"Indeed they did, Roxy; and I was proud indeed that my little granddaughter could plan and carry out so fine an entertainment."

Roxy's face flushed happily. It was pleasant to have Grandmother praise her.

"Polly!" she exclaimed suddenly, remembering all Polly's suggestions and help. "It was Polly did the best of the circus!"

"I am sure Polly helped what she could," replied Grandma Miller.

CHAPTER X

POLLY'S NEWS

A FEW days after the birthday party one of the negro servants brought a stout rope from the storehouse and fixed a swing from the branch of the big butternut tree that grew near the house. A smooth board for a seat was notched and fitted to the rope, and Grandma Miller came out to give Roxy the first swing.

As Roxy found herself flying through the air so that her feet touched the leaves of the tree's lofty branches she laughed with delight; and as the swing slowed down and only moved evenly back and forth she called:

"Grandma, I can see way down to the river. Grandma, where does the river come from?"

"It rises in Pennsylvania, and empties into the Potomac just below Sharpsburg," replied Mrs. Miller, who had seated herself at the foot of the big tree and now looked off toward the peaceful Antietam, the slopes of South Mountain, and the fields of growing wheat. Grandma Miller knew

many stories of this valley, and had told Roxy of the days of the French and Indian War when the settlers along the Antietam were raided by the Indian allies of the French until they fled to Fredericktown for protection, and for years the fertile fields were deserted.

Braddock's army had passed through this valley; and, before the American Revolution, settlers returned to their homes, and farms again prospered, and people lived in safety. But Grandma Miller was not thinking of those far-off wars; for, as the summer of 1862 advanced, the people of Maryland knew that the national capital was in danger, that at any time Southern troops might sweep into Maryland; and as Mrs. Miller looked toward South Mountain she wondered how long this safety and peace would continue, and where Roxy's father was on that August morning.

She said nothing to Roxy of these matters, but the little girl knew how anxiously her mother awaited news from her soldier father, and now as she noticed how grave her grandma's face was as she looked off across the fields Roxy became sure that Grandma Miller was thinking of the war, and of her father, and she said softly:

“Grandma, don’t you s’pose my father is ever coming to see us?” and she let the swing come nearly to a standstill.

“I hope so, Roxy! But we cannot get news of him. The last we heard was that his regiment was with General Pope. But that was weeks ago. It is August now, and we hear only rumors. It may be that some day your father will come riding over the bridge and tell us all his adventures.”

“I wish he would come soon,” said Roxy soberly, and she resolved to watch the bridge so that she might be the first one to see her father.

“I believe it would be a good plan to have a seat built around this tree,” said Grandma Miller, as she started to return to the house. “It is cooler here than on the porch, and it would be a good place for you to bring your dolls for tea-parties.”

“Yes, indeed,” replied Roxy, “and I could have my ‘circus’ animals march right around the tree. Perhaps I could have a doll’s party, and ask the little Hinham girls to bring all their dolls!”

“You could indeed, my dear, and I will have Jacob make the seat this very day. We will have

a good wide seat," said Grandma, and with a smiling nod she went toward the house.

Roxy, looking after her, told herself that Grandma Miller was exactly the kind of a grandmother that every little girl ought to have.

"She doesn't put things off until next year; she has them done right away," Roxy thought approvingly.

The shining gold ring on her forefinger reminded her again of Grandma's warning that it was usually "silly to be angry," and Roxy smiled, for only yesterday the little ring had prevented her from again being vexed at Polly.

"I'm never going to quarrel with Polly; she never quarrels back," she said aloud.

"That's because she is fourteen years old," came the laughing response, and the surprised Roxy nearly fell from the swing when she found Polly standing close beside her.

"Oh, Polly! I am going to be just like you when I am fourteen!" declared Roxy, but Polly shook her head.

"You won't have red hair," she responded; "but what a fine swing!" and she looked at the long stout ropes, and then off across the quiet

valley, and Roxy noticed that her friend's face was very sober.

"What's the matter, Polly?" she asked.

"Oh, Roxy! My father has started to join McClellan's army, and Mr. Greaves has gone with him and Mr. Hinham. They went early this morning. There is news that the Confederate soldiers under General Jackson are advancing against General Pope's army, and ——"

But before Polly could say another word Roxy was out of the swing exclaiming:

"My father is with General Pope! Oh, Polly!"

Polly's arm was about Roxy's shoulders and for a moment the little Yankee girl and the Maryland girl stood looking into each other's eyes.

"Yes, Roxy. But isn't it splendid that our fathers are both fighting in the Union Army?" said Polly. "I came over to tell you about it."

The two girls turned silently toward the house, and Roxy's thoughts were no longer about a doll's party under the big tree; she could think only of her soldier father.

"It's no use for me to watch the bridge now, is it, Polly? I don't suppose my father will come for weeks and weeks!" she said mournfully.

"Perhaps he will come any day," declared Polly. "Anyway you had better watch."

Neither Mrs. Miller nor Mrs. Delfield seemed surprised by Polly's news. In fact on the day of the surprise party Mr. Greaves had told them that a number of Antietam men were preparing to start for Alexandria where McClellan's forces were encamped; and they now encouraged Polly to believe that her father and his friends would not be in immediate danger.

Polly could not stay long.

"Now Father is gone I'll have to work more steadily," she said gravely. "I am to help in the garden and look after the chickens, so I can't come over very often."

Roxy looked so mournful at this that Polly promptly added: "But we can signal to each other every morning, Roxy; so if I have time we can meet at the big sycamore," and at this Roxy's face brightened.

"Couldn't I come over and help you, Polly?" she asked hopefully.

But Mrs. Miller declared that Roxy could not be spared.

"We must finish the quilt, and start a box of things for the soldiers and you can help a great

deal," she said; and that afternoon the quilting-frame was again set up in the dining-room, and Roxy, seated beside Grandma Miller, did her best to set every stitch evenly, and was well pleased when her mother praised her work, saying that Roxy could quilt as well as her own mother.

While Roxy had been helping on the quilt Jacob had been busy making the wide seat around the butternut tree, and when the little girl came out on the porch in the late afternoon he called to her to come and see it.

Jacob was Dulcie's husband, a good-natured negro who had charge of the farm work, and who could do many useful things; and when Roxy ran toward the tree he pointed to the wide seat he had just finished and said proudly:

"Dar! Dat seat am as solid as dis earth. Dat am a fine seat, Missy."

"Yes, indeed, Jacob! And I am going to bring my circus animals out and have them march around the tree," said Roxy. "Wait a minute, Jacob, and I'll fetch them."

"I should admire ter see dat circus, an' so'd all de niggers!" responded the man eagerly. "If yo' ain' no objection, Missy, I'd like ter hab Dulcie an' May-Rose an' de men wot helps me,

step up here an' see yo' animals, an' hear yo' tell 'bout 'em?" and Jacob looked pleadingly toward Roxy.

"Yes, Jacob! Ask them all to come," replied Roxy, running toward the house, while Jacob hurried off toward the cabins where the negroes lived to tell them of the entertainment in store for them.

Roxy carried the boxes containing the paper animals to the wide seat and had them all arranged in a procession when she heard the chatter of the negroes as they came toward the tree.

Jacob was a little in advance of the others; and although Dulcie announced that by rights she ought to have charge of "dis gatherin'," Jacob paid no attention to her remarks, and told each one of the servants where they were to stand.

"We's all ready, Missy," he announced, smiling delightedly as his glance rested on the "circus."

Roxy smiled in response, as she stood by the seat holding the same hazel-rod that she had used on the day of the party.

"We will begin with the elephants," she said, "and as I go around the tree please follow me."

"Yas, yas, indeed, Missy Roxy," came the

reply from the delighted negroes, and Roxy pointed out elephants, camels and zebras, and told briefly where such animals lived, and something of their habits that she had learned from the big red-covered book in Grandma's book-closet.

There were many exclamations of wonder and surprise, and, when Roxy finished, a chorus of thanks, and Grandma Miller and Roxy's mother came down from the porch and told Dulcie to serve everyone with an extra good supper that night. "And remember it is a treat from Miss Roxy," she added smilingly; and Roxy again thought that her grandmother was a pattern for all grandmothers to follow, as the well-pleased negroes followed Dulcie toward the kitchen.

"It was fun to show them the circus," Roxy declared, her eyes shining with delight, as her mother helped her gather up the animals and put them in the boxes. "And I don't see why slaves are not as happy as other people," she added thoughtfully. "I'm sure Jacob and Dulcie are happy."

"They are not slaves, my dear. Your grandfather gave all his negroes their freedom, and that is what many Southern people have done,

and many more were planning to do so before this war began," replied Grandma Miller.

"When the war is over every negro will be free, won't they, Grandma?" questioned Roxy, as they all walked up the slope.

"If the Union Army conquers the Confederates there will be no more slavery in America," Mrs. Miller replied gravely.

Roxy set her boxes on the porch steps, and stood looking off toward the bridge, remembering that Polly had told her that, after all, her father might secure leave of absence and appear at any time.

It had been a happy day, even if Polly's news had been discouraging, she thought, as her glance rested on the glimpse of quiet river, the stretch of gray road, and the distant bridge.

And as she looked Roxy's heart began to beat more quickly, for she could see a figure on horseback coming across the bridge; as it drew near she saw that the rider's coat was blue.

"It's Father! It's Father!" she exclaimed, and raced down the slope to the opening in the wall that led to the highway.

CHAPTER XI

A TRIUMPHAL ARCH

THE blue clad figure on horseback came on so slowly that Roxy had reached the road long before the horseman was near enough for her to be sure that it was really her long expected father; and when he drew rein and called, "Roxy!" and smiled down at her the little girl, looking up at the thin worn face, cried out: "Oh, Father! You're sick," and Captain Delfield nodded. "Pretty well used up, my dear. Run back to the house and tell your mother I'm coming," and he turned his horse into the lane leading to the house while Roxy raced across the slope and ran into the house calling: "Mother! Mother! Mother!" until Mrs. Delfield and Grandma Miller both came hurrying to know what had happened.

"Father has come! Father is here!" said the little girl, rushing through the house to the yard where Jacob was tenderly helping Captain Delfield from the tired horse.

Roxy's father was not only worn out by his long journey on horseback; he had not yet re-

covered from a wound received some weeks earlier on the slopes of Malvern where the Union forces had repulsed the Confederates and driven Lee's army toward Richmond.

For the week after his arrival Captain Delfield was in bed, and Roxy spent a part of each day in the big front chamber where her father's bed was drawn near the windows so that he could look off across the valley to the distant hills.

He wanted to hear all that she could tell him about her friend Polly and the little Hinham girls, and when she told of her discovery of the Yankee soldier who had escaped from Richmond prison he listened eagerly and smiled over Roxy's description of Dulcie's discovery that her food had been taken.

"Helping that boy will help win the war, Roxy; and you helped the Yankee Army without knowing it," he said.

"But, Father, if it had been a Confederate boy I would have taken him food just the same," Roxy responded, half fearing that her father, wounded by a Confederate bullet, might not agree with her in this; but Captain Delfield answered approvingly:

"Of course, dear child. The Confederate

soldiers are a worthy foe. Of course you would have helped any starving man."

Roxy searched the fields for wild flowers for her father's room; she brought up her dolls to keep him company, and one day, to Dulcie's horror, Roxy was discovered bringing the squawking bantams through the kitchen, and in spite of all Dulcie's exclamations and warnings the little girl carried the surprised fowl up to her father's chamber and set the covered basket down near his bed.

"What have you named them?" he asked, leaning over to admire their shining feathers and bright eyes; and Roxy confessed that she had not thought of naming them.

"Why not call them Napoleon and Josephine?" he suggested. "You see, Napoleon was small but he was as brave and noisy as this small bantam; and Josephine was beautiful, and so is Madame Bantam!"

Roxy laughed happily. Now that her father could sit up the greater part of each day and was always ready to tell her stories, and to hear whatever she had to say, Roxy felt that all was well; and to have him give the bantams such fine names made her once more eager for a visit from Polly

that she might tell her friend all that had happened in the week since her father's arrival; for Polly no longer came every day. She was keeping her promise to her father, and worked in the garden and in the house, and the two girls' signals each morning was all they knew of each other.

Roxy was looking forward to the day when her father would come down to the porch; her mother said they would have a celebration on that day, and Roxy signalled for Polly to come over, and greatly to her delight Polly's answering signal was "yes," and Roxy hastened to the kitchen to ask a special favor of Dulcie.

"Dulcie, I expect my father will come downstairs to-morrow," she began.

"Now, ain' dat good news, Missy!" exclaimed Dulcie. "I reckons I'd better hab fried chicken, an' new peas, an' co'n fritters"—and with her hands on her hips and her eyes fixed far above Roxy's head Dulcie named over a list of tempting dishes, to which Roxy listened a little impatiently and before she had finished interrupted by exclaiming:

"Yes! Yes, Dulcie! And plum tarts! I specially want plum tarts."

“Does yo’ so, Missy Roxy? Den I’ll hev ter make de pastry ter-day. Pastry dat ain’ set de day ’fore it’s e’t ain’ wuth nothin’!” and Dulcie shook her head smilingly as she watched the little girl hurry off to the garden to gather the tall yellow lilies that blossomed near the stone wall.

Roxy carried these to her father’s room and found him sitting near the window.

“Polly’s coming to-morrow, and Dulcie’s going to have the best dinner, Father!” she exclaimed. “And you can try my swing!”

“That is what I mean to do,” Captain Delfield said, and in a few moments Roxy bade him good-bye and ran down-stairs for she was planning that her father’s first day down-stairs should be a real celebration, and she was eager to talk it over with Grandma Miller, who listened approvingly.

“Grandma, I have a plan!” she said, following Mrs. Miller to the dairy, a square building of stone near the house. The dairy was always cool, even on these hot August days. Its floor was of stone, and there was a bubbling spring of cool water in one corner.

There were shelves on two sides of the dairy holding big blue and yellow bowls and shining

tins filled with milk. There were two churns, that stood near the spring, and a broad stone shelf where Grandma worked the golden butter and stamped the squares with a beautiful rose.

Roxy always liked to visit the dairy, and to help Grandma make butter; but to-day as she sat down on the small three-legged stool in one corner of the room and watched her grandmother skimming the heavy yellow cream from the pans of milk her thoughts were not of butter.

“Grandma! I want to make an arch, a triumphal arch, for my father! I read about it in a story about George Washington. When heroes come back from war people put up triumphal arches, and my father is a hero,” declared Roxy.

“Why, I think that is a very good idea,” replied Grandmother, “and where do you want the arch?”

“In front of the porch,” replied Roxy, smiling happily that Grandma had so quickly agreed to her plan. “And I want to have it all green leaves, laurel and hazel branches, with yellow lilies mixed in; and I want Polly to sing when Father comes out on the porch!”

Grandma nodded approvingly and smiled at

Roxy. "Your father will think he has won the war," she said, "and I am glad you thought of so good a plan. You can ask Jacob to help you tomorrow morning, and you had best be up early so that the arch will be ready when your father comes down."

"Oh, yes, Grandma, I will be up at daylight," Roxy promised, and now started off to the brook to get branches of laurel for the arch. She was busy all the afternoon bringing armfuls of the shining green laurel, and graceful branches of hazel, and when she bade her father good-night she was more tired than she had been since the day of her walk to visit the Hinhams.

But she awoke very early. No one else in the house was astir, and when Roxy entered the kitchen Dulcie was just crossing the yard from her cabin.

"Gwine ter be a drea'ful hot day," Dulcie declared. "Yo' sit up ter dis lille roun' table clus ter de winder, Missy Roxy, an' I'll spread out somet'ing fer yo' ter eat. 'Twill be nigh an hour 'fore break'us!" And Dulcie drew a small table to an open window, covered it with a white cloth and brought a blue pitcher filled with milk, a blue bowl, and a plate of corn bread.

“Now, jes’ he’p yo’s’e’f, honey,” she said. “Jacob ’ll be ready time yo’ finished.”

Roxy was quite ready to obey, and as she ate the excellent corn bread and drank the cool milk she looked out of the window toward where the tall yellow lilies blossomed, and thought happily of her father’s surprise when he saw the “triumphal” arch.

“Dulcie, I am going to ask Polly to sing,” she said, when she was ready to leave the kitchen.

Dulcie chuckled and smiled, as she usually did at whatever Roxy might say.

“W’y don’ yo’ hab Jacob an’ de odder niggers sing? Dey know sum right fine songs. I reckon yo’ pa be right pleased, Missy Roxy, ter hear ’em!” she said.

The little girl clapped her hands in delight.

“That will be splendid, Dulcie! Splendid!” she exclaimed. “Oh! It’s really going to be a celebration.”

“Yo’ jes’ speak to yo’ grandma ’bout it!” said the well-pleased Dulcie.

“Grandma always says ‘yes,’” declared Roxy happily, and started off to tell Jacob just where to fix the tall willow saplings that he had cut as a frame for Roxy’s arch.

She selected a place half-way between the porch and the big butternut tree, and Jacob drove the saplings firmly into the ground, and drew their tops together in a graceful arch. He brought a step-ladder for Roxy to stand on and a ball of twine, and showed her how to fasten the branches of laurel and hazel leaves about the arched poles; and Roxy was busily at work when Polly, riding the little brown horse, trotted into the yard.

Polly was eager to help, and gathered an armful of the yellow lilies and helped Roxy put them in place at the top of the arch, where they glowed among the glossy laurel leaves, and, as Dulcie admiringly declared, "Look jes' like stars."

While the girls worked Roxy described her plan for her father's pleasure, and Polly laughingly consented to sing whatever Roxy wanted her to sing, and thought Dulcie's idea of having the negroes sing would be sure to please Captain Delfield, as indeed it did, when a few hours later he stepped out on the porch and saw the beautiful arch, and Roxy announced:

"Father! That's your triumphal arch! And Polly's going to sing," and he saw a tall girl in a tan-colored linen dress with shining red hair

standing near the flowery arch, who with a smiling greeting made him a low curtsy and sang:

“Hail to the Chief, who in triumph advances!
Honored and blessed be the ever-green pine!
Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,
Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line!”

And then with another curtsy, Polly came up to stand beside Roxy on the upper step, and before Captain Delfield could thank her for the song, Jacob, followed by the other negro servants, came around the corner of the house, and with smiling greetings to the Captain began singing:

“Nebber yo’ fear—
W’en de corn am growin’,
Nebber yo’ fear
W’en de flowers am’ blowin’.
Nebber yo’ fear de dreadful soun’
Risin’, risin’ out de groun’
Ob armies marchin’, marchin’ roun’.”

As the men sang they swayed back and forth in time to the tune, and finally disappeared behind the house in a solemn march as the song ended.

But Roxy ran after them and called them back and Captain Delfield thanked them heartily.

Then Roxy led her father under the arch to the swing, where he admired the wide seat around the tree, and declared that General McClellan himself could not have had a finer welcome.

It proved a day that the little group would long remember; not alone on account of Roxy's celebration for her father, but because it was the 29th of August, 1862, the day when General Pope found himself facing Stonewall Jackson, the great Confederate general, on the battle-field of Bull Run. A battle where the Union forces were driven from the field with great loss, and were pursued by Lee's army until, at Chantilly, Lee gave up the pursuit, and the broken battalions of the Union Army struggled back to Washington.

It was Roland Hinham who brought this news, several days later. Captain Delfield and Roxy were on the broad seat under the butternut when Roxy exclaimed: "Here comes Roland Hinham on horseback!"

"What is he riding like that for? His horse is coming at a gallop," said Captain Delfield, rising to his feet and watching Roland as the boy urged his horse up the slope.

The tired horse came to a standstill in the yard

and Roland swung himself from the saddle and ran toward Captain Delfield and hurriedly told him the news of the battle of Bull Run. "And that isn't all, sir," continued the excited boy. "General Lee's troops are marching into Maryland."

CHAPTER XII

STARTLING NEWS

“WILL the Southern soldiers come here?” Roxy asked, clinging to her father’s arm, but Captain Delfield did not reply; he was questioning Roland for news of the advancing army, and hearing that President Lincoln had given the command of the Army of the Potomac to General George B. McClellan.

“Then there is some hope of saving the Union,” declared Captain Delfield; “but if Confederate troops are moving into Maryland they will seize horses and cattle wherever they find them. We must drive our stock into the mountains and keep them out of sight until the danger is over.”

“What danger?” questioned Mrs. Miller, who had come down from the house to greet Roland, and Roxy again heard Roland tell the story of the rumors of advancing armies.

Captain Delfield encouraged them all by say-

ing that these hillside farms were too far from the direct routes of travel to make it likely that marching armies would trouble them; but Mrs. Miller nevertheless at once started Jacob and the other negroes to harvest the wheat, and to gather every crop in the fields bordering the highway.

Roland said that his mother and little sisters were going to Sharpsburg, and that he and some of the negroes meant, that very day, to start into the mountains with their horses, ponies and cows; and he bade them all good-bye, promising to let them know of the family's return home when the trouble was over.

Captain Delfield and Roxy walked slowly toward the house, and Roxy knew that her soldier father was wishing himself able to again join his regiment; but while he was better he was not yet able to sit up all day, and was easily tired, and there could be no question of his leaving home at present.

There were two fine gray mules belonging to Grandma Miller, and one driving horse, beside Captain Delfield's fine saddle-horse that had brought him safely on his long journey.

“The mules cannot be spared until the crops are harvested, and I do not mean to start the

cattle off until I see soldiers coming over the bridge," decided Mrs. Miller.

It seemed to Roxy that Roland's news had changed everything. No one now seemed to remember her, she thought, as she heard her father and mother talking of General McClellan and General Lee. She heard her father say that before the war began these two great generals had known each other well, and regarded each other highly. They had served together under the American flag in Mexico.

Roxy did not stay to hear more but went into the kitchen to find Dulcie sitting in the big rocking-chair, with her apron over her head, rocking vigorously back and forth and groaning with every breath.

"Stop, Dulcie! Whatever is the matter?" demanded Roxy, taking hold of the blue-checked apron and drawing it from Dulcie's face.

"We's all gwine ter be druv off into slav'ree; or mebbe we's all gwine ter be kill't!" declared the frightened woman.

For the first time that day Roxy laughed; and at the sight of the little girl's smiling face Dulcie began to regain a little courage. "Ain' we, Missy Roxy?" she half whispered.

“Of course not! Who said so?” asked Roxy.

“Jacob!” and Dulcie was promptly on her feet. “Does yo’ means ter tell me dat de Southern sojers ain’ a-marchin’ dis way?” she questioned.

“Oh, Dulcie! They won’t hurt *us*! Whoever said they would? And here it is ’most supper time and you haven’t begun anything,” and leaving the puzzled Dulcie Roxy went out to the yard. She visited “Napoleon” and “Josephine,” and promised not to let the invading army capture them, and then wandered down the slope to the wall and leaning against it stood looking off toward the Lawrence farm.

“I wonder if Polly knows?” she thought, and remembered that there were only two negro servants at the Lawrence place. “I’ll go over now and tell her,” she resolved, and ran down the slope toward the old sycamore, and climbed the pasture path leading to Polly’s home.

It was a long walk and Roxy was warm and tired when she discovered Polly, who was leading “Brownie” toward the stables.

“Did you signal that you were coming, Roxy?” called Polly.

Roxy shook her head. “I didn’t think about

signals," she said. "Polly, General Lee is marching into Maryland!"

Polly laughed delightedly.

"Oh, Roxy-Doxy! Have you made up a new game?"

Roxy stamped her foot angrily, forgetting the gold ring and her promise.

"Well, Polly Lawrence! I ran and ran, and I am as tired as I can be, and it isn't a game. I came to tell you so you could save your horses," she said, thinking angrily that she would now go straight home and never speak to Polly again.

But Polly's face was grave and she at once began asking Roxy questions, so that in a few moments Roxy no longer remembered to be angry, and was telling Polly all that she knew about the advance of Lee's soldiers, and of what her father had said about driving the horses into some hidden valley among the hills where they would be safe.

"If the Confederates find your father they will take him prisoner," Polly suddenly announced. "Of course they will, for they will see by his uniform that he is a Union soldier!"

"Oh, Polly!" exclaimed Roxy. "I don't be-

lieve my father thought about that," and her gray eyes widened with fear.

But Polly assured her that of course Captain Delfield had thought of it, and would prepare to avoid capture.

"If we could only have some warning before the soldiers get here perhaps no great harm would be done; we could drive off the stock, and go away ourselves, if that seemed best," Polly said thoughtfully. "Anyway, I'm not going to have 'Brownie' go until I do," and she patted the little brown horse lovingly.

"I guess I must go now," Roxy said. "You will signal every morning, won't you, Polly?"

Polly promised, and Roxy started for home, her thoughts filled with a new fear: that the Confederates might discover her father and take him prisoner. She remembered what Polly had said about being warned of the approach of the invading army; and before Roxy had reached the old sycamore she had made a firm resolve that she would watch the broad turnpike that led up from Virginia and warn her father and Polly at the first sight of marching troops; and the little girl at once began to plan how she could carry out this resolve. It would mean, she knew, that she

must be on the alert constantly, and that she must not let her mother, father or Grandmother Miller discover what she meant to do.

In the high pasture beyond the sycamore towered a rocky ledge where Polly and Roxy had often eaten their picnic luncheons, and the little girl now remembered that from the top of this mass of rock one could look off far beyond the bridge to where two roads met; one of these roads led off through the mountains, the other was the highway that led on past the Miller farm toward Sharpsburg.

“That’s just the place. I’ll go there every day and watch,” Roxy resolved quickly; and suddenly realizing that the sun was nearly out of sight behind the western hills, Roxy hurried toward home, and found the family at the supper table.

“Father, would the Confederates take you prisoner?” she asked eagerly, standing close beside her father’s chair.

“They would have to catch me first, my dear. If I see them first I’ll be safe enough,” he replied, and Roxy gave a little sigh of satisfaction as she sat down beside him.

“I’ll tell you the minute I see them,” she

promised soberly, and Roxy thought to herself how wonderful it would be if she could really do something to help her soldier father: perhaps save him from that dreaded prison from which the Yankee boy had escaped.

That night the talk was of invading armies, and of the danger that seemed to threaten Washington; and Roxy, curled up on the old sofa in the sitting-room, again resolved that she would not fail in her plan to be at the ledge at an early hour the next morning. She began to wish that she had told Polly of her plan.

“Polly always thinks of things that I don’t: of signals, and all sorts of things,” thought Roxy; and at the remembrance of signals a new idea flashed into her mind. She must tell Polly as soon as she could, and she could signal Polly from the ledge. That would be splendid. Roxy no longer felt tired or sleepy. She jumped up from the sofa and if at that very moment her mother had not said: “Bedtime and past, Roxy,” the little girl would have been eager to start off across the pastures to tell her friend of the new plan.

“Why, Roxy! Your eyes are shining, and your face is flushed; are you ill?” exclaimed Mrs. Delfield as the little girl stood beside her.

“No, only I wish it was morning. I want to tell Polly something. I am going to get up at daylight and go over to Polly’s; may I?” Roxy asked.

“Why, yes. And ask Polly if she and her mother mean to stay at home. Tell her to come here at any time if we can help them.”

“Yes, Mother! Polly can signal if she wants me,” Roxy answered.

“‘Signal’?” questioned Captain Delfield, and listened to Roxy’s description of the signals the two girls had arranged from their upper windows.

“Better not let any soldiers discover your signals,” he said smilingly. “You know that is the way armies direct attacks, by signals.”

But Captain Delfield did not for a moment imagine that within a few days these very signals that Roxy described were to involve his little daughter in real danger.

CHAPTER XIII

SEPTEMBER SIXTH

ROXY was up as the first rays of the September sun came through her eastern window; but early as it was she found Dulcie busy in the kitchen, and could see Jacob starting off to the fields with the mule team.

“Yo’ gran’ma says ebery grain ob’ wheat and ebery ear ob’ co’n mus’ be out er de fields ’fore de marchin’ armies comes dis way,” said Dulcie solemnly, as she gave Roxy a plate of freshly baked corn bread, and bade her run to the dairy for a pitcher of milk.

“I want my lunch basket filled, please, Dulcie,” said Roxy. “I may be gone all day.”

“Don’ yo’ go near de roads, Missy Roxy,” warned Dulcie, “an’ yo’ tells Missy Polly Lawrence not ter go ridin’ off lik’ she does. ’Tain’ gwine ter be safe,” and the negro woman shook her head solemnly, as she started toward the pantry to fill the little covered basket.

Roxy put on the big straw hat that she always wore in her tramps about the pastures, and promising Dulcie to keep away from the roads she set forth. As she ran down the slope her thoughts were of the lookout she meant to keep from the top of the high ledge, and of the signals that should tell Polly that marching soldiers could be seen in the distance.

“I’ll have to fix a pole on the ledge,” she decided, “and Polly will give me some strips of white cloth.”

The early September morning was cool and pleasant, and the air was fragrant with ripening fruit and the scent of autumn flowers. Along the wall the grapes were turning purple, and Roxy noticed the yellow stubble of the wheat fields.

As she neared the brook she saw bunches of purple thistles growing among the silvery-like young willows on the borders of the stream, and the little girl lingered to admire the beauty spread before her.

But she was too eager to see Polly to stay long near the quiet stream. And as she climbed the pasture slope she decided that it would be a good plan to leave her lunch basket at the foot of the

ledge where she could get it on her return; and she set it carefully on a shelf of rock that she could easily reach, and then hurried on.

Polly, busy in the hillside orchard gathering apples, had seen Roxy as she came toward the farm, and came running to meet her, her red hair dancing about her face.

"What is it, Roxy?" she asked a little anxiously, putting her arm about Roxy's shoulders, and Roxy told of her plan to climb the ledge and keep watch of the distant highway.

"And then, Polly, when I signalled that soldiers were coming you could start off with your horses and cows for the hills, and I could run home and tell Grandma."

Polly listened gravely.

"It's a splendid plan, Roxy. I think you were clever to think of it. And the ledge is just the place. What did your father say about it? Was he not proud that you had thought of it?" she asked.

"Oh, Polly! I didn't tell him. I was afraid they would not let me do it. And, Polly, you won't tell, will you?" pleaded Roxy. "I want to keep it secret until I do see the soliders. Perhaps, after all, they won't come."

Polly agreed, and the two girls decided that the moment Roxy should see any sign of advancing troops she should fasten the strip of white cloth, that Polly would give her, to a stout pole and wave it from the top of the ledge.

“But of course after you wave it you had better fix the pole firmly among the rocks and start for home,” said Polly; “there are a lot of sticks near the ledge that will do for a flagpole,” she added, and after a little more talk of Roxy’s plan the friends said good-bye and Roxy turned back toward the ledge, well pleased that Polly had so promptly approved of her plan.

It was rather a difficult matter for the little girl to reach the top of the mass of rocks that rose from the rough pasture. To carry her basket and the slender pole that she had found, and to climb along the slippery ledges without losing her footing made it very slow work. Roxy at last poked the flag-stick as far ahead of her as she could, then, reaching up, she set the basket on some outstanding rock, and this left her hands free to seize at bushes and rocks and pull herself up to where the basket and flag-stick rested, and in this way she finally reached the top, where masses of rough stone, scrubby

laurel-bushes, and one twisted little oak tree covered the surface.

Roxy was glad to rest in the scanty shade of the little oak tree. Sitting there she could look over the peaceful countryside and the quiet Antietam as it flowed under its arched bridges and made its way to the Potomac.

Turning her glance to the highway she could see the road like a gray ribbon in the distance, and realized that no horsemen could approach without her seeing them when they were yet miles distant, and Roxy smiled happily to think how well she was carrying out her plan.

But after she had rested from her scramble up the ledge, she began to look about for something to amuse her, and to realize that an entire day by herself on the top of this ledge was a very long time. She wished that she had brought the big rag doll, "Dinah," that she had had ever since she could remember, for company; and she wondered what little Indian girls did for toys.

"I'll bring Dinah to-morrow," she resolved, and just then a gray squirrel poked his head over a near-by rock and fixed his bright, startled glance on Roxy, and an instant later another gray head appeared beside the first squirrel and they

watched her for a brief moment and then vanished.

“ Oh! ” Roxy whispered softly, and noiselessly opening her lunch basket she drew out a fat molasses cooky dotted with raisins and tiny nuts, and breaking off little bits she threw them toward the place where the squirrels had appeared, and it was not long before the little creatures again ventured out and seized upon these unexpected dainties.

Very softly Roxy began to speak to them, at the same time tossing bits of the cooky in their direction.

“ You must be Confederates because you wear gray clothes,” she said. “ Lee and Jackson, I’ll call you, because Father says they are as brave as any Yankee soldier, and you are brave to come so near,” and Roxy held the last crumbs of the cooky in her outstretched hand tempting her new friends.

All the morning she found amusement in watching the squirrels and trying to make friends with them, although she did not forget to keep a sharp outlook toward the distant road; and when she saw the sun in mid-heaven she ate a part of the contents of her lunch basket, and again fed the

squirrels with scraps of food, and was delighted when one of them boldly perched himself on her foot.

This first day that Roxy spent on the pasture ledge was September 6th, 1862, the very day on which the Confederates, under General Jackson, made their entry into the town of Frederick, Maryland. They had expected to be welcomed, but they were disappointed in this.

Jackson's army of shoeless soldiers clad in tattered uniforms were not received as "liberators," as Lee had expected. There was but little secessionist element in Western Maryland; and loyal women in Frederick dared to throw out the flag of the Union from their windows. McClellan's army was marching to meet the invading foe, and a few days later the Confederates left Frederick, moving westward beyond the mountains, and McClellan's troops riding into town on a bright Sunday morning were warmly welcomed.

People crowded about General McClellan, decking "Dan," the fine horse he rode, with wreaths and flowers, and the Union flag floated everywhere.

But the people on the hillside farms above Sharpsburg did not know of this for days after-

ward—not until a terrible battle had raged almost at their very doors; and while General Jackson moved down the south side of the Potomac toward Harper's Ferry the farmers harvested their grain in the fields along the Antietam and waited for news that might tell them of the movement of Lee's troops.

Roxy did not mean to go to sleep that first day of her watch and when, in mid-afternoon, she awakened suddenly, to find both of the gray squirrels had settled themselves in her hat, that she had put down beside her lunch-basket, she wondered at herself, and looked anxiously toward the road, fearful lest by sleeping she had risked her father's safety.

But the road lay quiet and untraveled, and now a new question came into Roxy's thoughts. "Nights." Perhaps the army might advance under cover of the night, she thought. But the little girl finally decided there was nothing she could do in that case.

"I'll just watch days; that's all I can do," she thought, and shared the remainder of her luncheon with "Lee" and "Jackson."

It had seemed a very long day to Roxy, and when the sun began to approach the western

horizon she was glad to scramble down the ledge and start for home.

“ I’ll bring ‘ Dinah ’ to-morrow,” she thought, as she ran down the slope toward the sycamore.

As Roxy came in sight of the big yard near the house she gave a sudden exclamation.

“ It’s a gray pony!” she said, as if she could hardly believe it, and as she entered the yard she again exclaimed: “ It really is a gray pony,” and she ran to where the pony was nibbling at the thick grass beside the fence.

“ It looks just like one of the Hinham’s ponies,” she said aloud, as she stopped to look at it and wonder how it came to be in Grandma Miller’s yard; and seeing Dulcie in the kitchen doorway she called:

“ Dulcie, where did this pony come from? ”

“ Dat pony ’rive here dis mornin’, Missy Roxy. Young Massa Hinham lef’ dat pony; an’ he say it were for Missy Roxy to hev ’til he comes ter fetch it. I reckon dat’s yo’ pony, Missy,” and Dulcie beamed and nodded as she saw Roxy’s delighted smile. “ Young Massa Hinham say dat de pony’s name am ‘ Beauty,’ ” Dulcie added, and Roxy ventured to pat “ Beauty’s ” neck, and found the pony well pleased by her attention.

Jacob declared the newcomer as "tame as a kitten," and after supper Roxy came back to the yard, climbed to the pony's back and, guiding it by pulling on its mane and rapping her feet sharply against its fat sides, she rode it about the yard, and for the time entirely forgot all about the ledge and her task of watching a distant road.

Grandma Miller said that she knew all about the gray pony: Roland, when he was Roxy's age, had trotted it up and down the country roads and across fields and pastures, and Jasmine often rode on its fat back.

"Roxy will be perfectly safe with 'Beauty'; and she can ride over to see Polly instead of walking," said Mrs. Miller, greatly to Roxy's delight, who at once decided that on the following morning instead of climbing up the slope to the ledge she would ride on "Beauty." But she said nothing of this to Grandma, and was ready to go to bed at an early hour after her long day on the distant ledge.

CHAPTER XIV

ROXY TAKEN PRISONER

EVERYONE about the Miller farm was so busy that Roxy's daily disappearance did not attract much notice. With her well-filled lunch basket she would run into the yard, slip bit and bridle over "Beauty's" head, seat herself on his broad back and trot off down the slope to the ledge, and then leave "Beauty" to wander about the pasture until the late afternoon.

The pony never went far away. He would feed on the wild grasses, going to the brook to drink the cool water, and come trotting back to the shade of the ledge. Several times each day Roxy would leave her watch-tower and go down to pat "Beauty" and keep him company for a few moments. The little creature had always been with children, and was well content to keep within hearing of Roxy's voice.

"Dinah," the big rag doll, now lived permanently under the scrubby oak tree on top of the ledge, and the two gray squirrels, "Lee" and

“ Jackson,” became so tame that they would come running to watch Roxy climb up the ledge, chittering and scolding noisily, and eager for bits from the well-filled lunch basket. They were no longer afraid of the little girl, and when they would perch themselves beside “ Dinah ” as if expecting the big doll to feed them, watching her with sharp, bead-like eyes, Roxy would laugh with delight. By the end of the third day of her self-appointed task she found the time going very rapidly and thought the top of the ledge the finest of playhouses.

On the second day Polly had appeared at noon-day bringing a fine ripe melon and some peaches, and the two girls had feasted happily.

“ We might signal to each other just for fun,” Polly suggested. “ You could wave the signal three times at noon and again just before you start for home, and I’ll watch for it. But if you set up the pole with the signal fastened to it, and don’t wave at all, I’ll know that means ‘ Soldiers on the road,’ ” said Polly. “ You won’t be so lonely if you can signal me,” she added; and Roxy promptly declared that she was not lonely; that “ Lee ” and “ Jackson ” and “ Dinah ” were the best of company.

“And having the pony makes a lot of difference, Polly. Just think when I do see the soldiers I can get home so quickly and tell Father,” she said; and then she showed Polly the tiny house she had made for “Dinah,” building up three walls of flat stone and making a roof of twigs and oak-leaves. “And the squirrels like it, too; they run in and out as if they thought I had made it for them,” Roxy said; and Polly declared the little house to be perfect, and again praised Roxy for keeping watch so steadily.

“It’s just like being a real soldier on guard, Roxy,” she said, and Roxy smiled happily; but Polly’s next words made her smile vanish. “If the armies don’t come at night,” Polly added thoughtfully.

“You don’t suppose they will, Polly? Oh! What would we do?” said Roxy, nearly ready to cry at the thought that, after all, she might not be of any use to the Union cause or to her soldier father.

“I suppose if the Confederates were on the march at night they’d ride straight on toward Washington; they wouldn’t stop at all, and perhaps that would be the best for all of us,” Polly said gravely. “But if they march by day you’ll

see them, Roxy, and signal me and Mother and I will start off with the horses."

This satisfied Roxy, and she bade Polly a cheerful good-bye, and that night waved her white signal as they had agreed before she mounted "Beauty" and trotted down the slope toward home.

For several days Roxy signalled as Polly had suggested, played with "Dinah" and the squirrels, and won the friendship of a handsome squawking blue jay who began to share her luncheon with the squirrels, and would scold noisily if he was not promptly attended to. And then, on the afternoon of September thirteenth, came the adventure that Roxy would never forget. She was waving her good-night signal to Polly when a firm grasp on her arm made her drop the stick to which the white signal was fastened and call out in fear as she looked up to find a stranger in worn butternut-colored clothing standing beside her.

"What's all this?" he asked gruffly. "I've had my eye on this signalling for two days; what does it mean?"

For a moment Roxy was too frightened to answer, and the man's voice softened as he realized

that the little girl was staring at him in evident terror.

“Don’t be afraid. I only want to know why you come to this ledge every day and signal. I reckon somebody is watching out for those signals, eh?” and a little smile crept over his grim face as Roxy nodded in response.

“I thought so!” he declared, evidently well pleased. “Now tell me all about it,” he continued in a more friendly manner. “Something to do with armies and soldiers, isn’t it?” he asked and again Roxy nodded.

“Well, tell me who sends you up here? And what for?” he questioned, and now Roxy regained her courage. Gruff and stern as the stranger seemed Roxy was no longer afraid of him, and she now answered quickly:

“Nobodys sends me.”

“That’s a likely story. A little girl like you perched up here day after day waving a white flag at certain hours. Where is your home?”

“Newburyport, Massachusetts,” replied Roxy.

“A Yankee girl! And what are you doing here?” he asked, but Roxy did not answer. She wished now that she had not answered any of his questions.

“Where do you come from?” she now ventured, and at this unexpected question the man laughed.

“I don’t mind telling you that my home is in South Carolina, and I’d be mighty glad to be there,” he answered; “but I’ve no time to stand here. I want to know about this signalling. If you are a Yankee girl I reckon you’re here to protect some sneaking Yankee soldiers who are hid up along these mountains to fire on Lee’s soldiers!” and he fixed his sharp glance on Roxy, and for a moment the little girl felt sure that he knew all about her wounded soldier father; and she quickly realized that she must not let this man know where she lived.

“You’d better come with me,” he continued, looking about as if thinking some enemy might be near, and he motioned for Roxy to start down the ledge. Now and then he held out his hand to help her over some rough place among the rocks, or where the soil was treacherously loose among the tangle of roots, and when they reached the ground he said sternly:

“Now is your chance. Tell me where the Yankee soldiers are and you can go straight home. If you don’t tell me I’ll have to take you with

me, and I will say I don't want to do that," and he watched Roxy anxiously.

But the little girl did not speak. Even if he did not carry her off, she thought, she would not dare to go home for fear that he might follow her and find her father. And suddenly a new fear took possession of Roxy's thoughts: the fear that her father might walk down the slope to meet her as he sometimes did and that this Confederate soldier would see him.

With a sudden resolve to go as far away from the Miller farm as possible Roxy sprang forward and ran up the slope toward the woods, and instantly the man was after her and she felt herself seized and lifted in his arms. But she made no outcry, as the man, muttering angrily, turned down the hillside and hurried on to a little travelled road that skirted the mountain slope, and here he set the little girl down, and with a warning word not to move a step, he disappeared behind a thicket of tall laurel bushes. She wondered what was to happen, but he was back in a moment leading a thin gray horse; he lifted Roxy to the saddle, swung himself up behind her and sent the horse forward at a gallop; and Roxy comforted her fears for her father's

safety as she realized they were going away from the familiar slopes of the Miller farm.

That very afternoon Roxy's mother had determined that it would be better for Roxy not to go, as she supposed the little girl did, to see Polly every day, and she had decided that when "Beauty" should come trotting into the yard bringing the smiling, happy Roxy home from her long day of play she would tell her that after this she wanted her little daughter at home. Mrs. Delfield had not the least thought that at that very moment Roxy was miles away in a Confederate camp.

The sun was setting when "Beauty" was seen coming up the slope, and when it was discovered that Roxy was not with him Mrs. Delfield and Jacob started at once to look for her, feeling sure the pony had run away from Roxy, leaving her to walk home.

But when they reached the Lawrence farm and discovered that Roxy had not been there Mrs. Delfield was so alarmed that Polly told her the story of Roxy's plan to keep watch on top of the pasture ledge so that she could warn her father if Confederate troops were seen on the highway.

"And she signalled me good-night; she must

be there now," said Polly, and went with Mrs. Delfield to the pasture and at the foot of the ledge called "Roxy! Roxy!" But no answer came.

They all climbed to the top and searched carefully, finding Roxy's hat and lunch-basket, and being puzzled and alarmed that the little girl had left these behind her.

Jacob was sent to tell Roxy's father and Grandma Miller that Roxy could not be found; and until darkness settled over the hills and valleys they searched slope and pasture for the missing girl; and all night long Jacob and the other servants hunted along the brook and mountain-side calling Roxy's name, while Grandma Miller and Mrs. Delfield wandered down the highway and over the bridge, coming home tired and discouraged.

Captain Delfield was the only one who came near guessing what had befallen his little daughter.

"I believe the signalling is at the bottom of her disappearance. Very likely Confederate scouts have been sent ahead of the main army, and if one of them discovered signalling going on they may have taken Roxy to camp to question her; but no harm will befall her, be sure of that. No

Southern soldier would harm a child. When she tells her story she will be brought home in safety," he said.

But Captain Delfield could not know that his loyal little daughter would not tell her story, or even the place where she lived for fear that by so doing she might endanger her father's safety.

CHAPTER XV

ROXY'S RIDE TO SHARPSBURG

THE September twilight had settled into dusk when the Confederate soldier left the country road, turning his horse into a grove of sycamores that bordered the Antietam River several miles below the Miller farm.

The newcomers were instantly greeted by two other soldiers; and when Roxy's companion called out: "Here's a Yankee prisoner, director of a signalling corps," they looked at him in amazement, and he set Roxy down in front of them and continued: "Right here! This girl is a Yankee, and she was stationed on a high ledge, has been there for days, keeping watch on the road, and twice each day signalling, probably to some Yank, so that at the first sight of Lee's army he can be off to bring McClellan after us," and he frowned so fiercely that Roxy found it hard to keep back her tears.

The two other soldiers looked at her gravely, and the elder of the two said kindly:

“ Well, she will probably tell us all about it, won’t you, little girl? ”

“ No, sir! ” Roxy replied, and at this the man who had brought her to the camp laughed.

“ She’s well trained to keep the secret; not a word out of her,” he said.

“ I have broiled a couple of chickens over the coals, and have some melons; we’ll have a bite to eat, and after supper I reckon little Miss Yankee will tell us just what the signals mean, and then I’ll take her home,” said the elderly soldier, smiling at Roxy.

“ Sit down,” said the other gruffly, pointing to a stump near by, and Roxy obeyed. When one of the men brought her food she shook her head. She was not hungry, and while she watched her companions eat she looked around the little grove, and began to wonder if she could not escape and make her way home; and the elder soldier, as if reading her thoughts, shook his head at her smilingly.

“ No use, Miss Yankee girl; we’d catch you,” he said, and at this Roxy began to be really frightened, and to feel herself a prisoner.

The men paid no further attention to her, lighting their pipes, and talking eagerly of the move-

ments of Confederate troops. Roxy heard them say that General Jackson was moving toward Harper's Ferry, where he would drive the Yanks from the place and move on to Hagerstown. And this was really accomplished on the following day, as McClellan's troops did not arrive in time to prevent the surrender of the Union garrison of eleven thousand men who became prisoners of war of the Confederates.

Once again the soldiers turned to Roxy and endeavored to persuade her to tell to whom she signalled, and why; but the little girl kept silent. One of the men threatened that they would take her so far from home that she would never find her way back, and at this Roxy's eyes filled with tears; but she remembered the Yankee soldier boy, and what he had said of prison, and again she resolved that she must not let these men discover that her father was a Union soldier or they would surely take him prisoner.

At last one of the men declared that he did not believe Roxy really knew anything of the real meaning of her signals. "And if she does, we've stopped it. Whoever put her there knows by this time that we've been on the watch. It's getting late. I'll take the girl over to that cabin in the

field and tell them to keep her until morning and then carry her back to the second bridge above here; she can see the ledge from there and find her way home. We must move on," he said, and the man who had brought Roxy now led her across a shadowy field to a tumble-down cabin where an evidently frightened negro woman opened the sagging door, and promised to take care of the little girl and to obey the directions of the soldier.

"Good-bye, Miss Yankee girl," the man said as he turned to go. "Reckon I've put a stop to any good your signals could do. Do you hear that?" And Roxy heard a dull booming sound, the echo of far-off artillery; the little girl did not know this, but the soldier knew it was the far-off guns of an attacking army, and with another warning to the negro woman he hastened away.

Roxy was so tired that she was glad to lie down on the rough cot in the corner of the room, and, in spite of all her troubling thoughts, the little girl realized that she was free and in a short time would be safely at home, and was soon asleep.

Before sunrise the next morning the negro woman awoke Roxy. "We's got ter be up an' doin', Missy," she said anxiously. "Yo' jes'

drink some milk, an' I's got some co'n pone h'ar fer yo', an' we'll be off. I ain' gwine ter come back h'ar, I ain'!" she continued. "Dar's too many sojers comin' dis way. I reckon yo' fo'ks'll let me stay at yo' place, Missy, if I fetch yo' safe back?" and the anxious, frightened negro fixed her pleading glance on Roxy, who at once declared that she was sure her grandmother would let Etta-Belle, as the negro woman called herself, stay at the Miller farm. Roxy ate her breakfast hungrily, and was eager to start for home, and at an early hour they were on their way.

But Roxy was not to reach home that day; a new adventure was close at hand, and before they had reached the highway Etta-Belle stopped suddenly.

"Look dar, Missy!" she exclaimed in a frightened whisper pointing toward a distant slope. "Dar's an army marchin'. Boun' to Sharpsburg, shuh's yo' born, Missy!" and Roxy's glance followed Etta's pointing finger and she saw a long shining column of mounted soldiers, soldiers in blue uniforms, coming on at a rapid pace; without waiting for Etta-Belle Roxy raced across the field into the highway and ran toward the advancing soldiers. If she heard the negro

woman's frenzied cries she paid no attention to them; here were men wearing the same uniform that her father wore; she would, she quickly resolved, tell them about her father, about the Confederate scouts and what she had heard them say, and they would take her safely home.

She stood in the road waving her arms and shouted: "Union soldiers! Union soldiers!" and the two officers riding in advance of the troops drew rein within a few feet of where she stood and gazed at her sternly, in evident amazement that a ten-year-old girl should dare to halt a regiment of soldiers.

"She must be a messenger," said one of the officers, swinging himself from the saddle, and coming toward Roxy, who, bareheaded, and with her face flushed from her run, her eyes shining with excitement, was indeed a queer little person to bring a division of soldiers to a standstill. But she told her story clearly and eagerly, repeating what she had heard the Confederate scouts say of the movements of Jackson's army.

"And if you please, may I not ride home with you?" she concluded breathlessly, for Roxy supposed the soldiers were on the road that led by her Grandma Miller's, but this was not the case.



HE LIFTED HER TO THE SADDLE IN FRONT OF HIM

The soldiers were bound for Sharpsburg, and the officer, supposing the little girl knew this, and that her home was near the town, promptly agreed to Roxy's request and lifting her to the saddle in front of him, called a sharp word of command and they were off.

Etta-Belle, hiding behind the bushes at the edge of the field, and shaking with terror, watched until they were out of sight, and then started off in the other direction toward the Miller farm. "I reckons dey'll wan' news ob dat chile," she muttered as she hurried along the road. Roxy had told the woman where she lived, and Etta-Belle had heard of the Miller farm, and toward noon she climbed the slope to the farmhouse and the anxious family gathered to hear her story of what had befallen Roxy.

"An' de lille gal rush right into de road an' stop de army, an' de sojer set her on de hoss an' de army go right on," she concluded.

Rejoiced as they were to have news of their little daughter, Captain and Mrs. Delfield could not feel that she was safe until she was again at home; and it was decided that Mrs. Delfield and Jacob should start at once for Sharpsburg and endeavor to find Roxy. Grandma Miller's horse

was quickly harnessed to the high buggy and they were off. Etta-Belle had made friends with Dulcie, and Grandma Miller had said she might stay at the farm.

It was early twilight when Mrs. Delfield reached a friend's house on the outskirts of Sharpsburg, and was told that General Lee's troops were encamped a mile north of the town on the Hagerstown road near the Dunker Church, a small stone building that stood near a body of woods, beyond which was a field, and it was here that General Jackson's troops were posted, and it was here that the terrible battle of Antietam was to take place.

Mrs. Delfield's friends told her that McClellan's army was approaching, that on the ridge above Sharpsburg Union batteries were already mounted, and that probably Roxy was not far away; and within an hour of Mrs. Delfield's arrival the little girl was seen approaching the house.

Roxy had a long story to tell. She had remembered that her mother's friend, Mrs. Davis, lived on the edge of the town, and the young officer had brought her within sight of the house.

"And, Mrs. Davis, he says that there is to be a

battle, that General Burnside's soldiers are coming ——”

But Mrs. Delfield interrupted Roxy's eager story to ask her the name of the officer who had been kind to her, but Roxy shook her head. “I don't know, Mother,” she replied; “but he knows my father, and he gave me these,” and Roxy drew two brass buttons from the pocket of her gingham dress. “I'm going to keep them always,” she declared; “and he said I had acted like a soldier!” and Roxy smiled happily.

It was now too late, and Roxy was too tired, for them to start for home that night; and, although Roxy slept peacefully, her mother could not sleep. She knew that every hour marching troops were gathering for battle, and in the dim morning hours Jacob had the horse harnessed and waiting, and Roxy was again awakened before sunrise, and leaning sleepily against her mother's shoulder as Jacob turned toward home the little girl whispered:

“I guess Polly and I won't signal any more,” and Mrs. Delfield smiled as she responded:

“Perhaps it will be better not to,” but she felt very proud of the courage her little daughter had shown in refusing to tell the Confederate scouts

what the signals from the ledge meant, and that Roxy had so faithfully kept watch, hoping to warn her father of possible danger. To have her little girl safely beside her, and to realize that the great battle would probably now be fought miles away from the hillside farm made her indeed thankful.

Roxy slept nearly all the way home, and as Grandma Miller came into the yard and lifted the little girl from the buggy the first person Roxy's eyes rested on was the smiling Etta-Belle, neatly dressed in a freshly washed calico.

"I'se h'ar, Missy, an' I'se gwine ter stay," she announced, and a moment later a tall girl came racing up the slope, the sun shining on her dancing red hair, and Roxy ran to meet her calling:

"Polly! Polly! I rode to Sharpsburg with the Union Army!"

CHAPTER XVI

THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM

“MOTHER, how many bridges cross the Antietam River?” questioned Roxy, the day after their return from the adventurous ride to Sharpsburg. Roxy was in the swing under the big butternut tree, and Mrs. Delfield had brought her sewing to the seat, resolved not to lose sight of her little daughter.

“Let me see. I think there are fourteen; the largest is near where the Antietam empties into the Potomac,” Mrs. Delfield replied thoughtfully, remembering that General Lee’s troops coming up from their triumph at Harper’s Ferry had marched over this bridge to Sharpsburg, and knowing that on this sunny September morning the Southern Army was posted near the Dunker Church beyond Sharpsburg.

On that very morning, September 15th, 1862, the Federal troops were appearing over the crest of the hill which overlooks the Antietam from the east; the great army of McClellan, ninety thou-

sand strong, streamed down the slopes and settled down in sight of the Confederates; and on each side of the Antietam, six miles distant from the Miller farm, the armies were now encamped, and ready for the terrible battle that was to rage for three days.

Mrs. Delfield was telling Roxy something of the story of the beautiful arched bridges of stone that had been built many years ago across the Antietam when Roxy jumped from the swing exclaiming:

“Mother! Mother! Here are the Hinhams,” and ran toward the yard where the Hinhams’ carryall drawn by a big brown horse had just arrived.

Mrs. Hinham and her little daughters were warmly welcomed; they were on their way home, as Mrs. Hinham said she was sure the farm was a much safer place than Sharpsburg.

Jasmine, Myrtle and Ivy went back to the swing with Roxy while Mrs. Hinham and Mrs. Miller and the Delfields talked anxiously of the battle that might begin any moment; and even as they stood there speaking of Lee and Jackson, of McClellan and Burnside, the generals in command, the rumble of distant artillery sounded

upon the air. From time to time during the day they heard these echoing guns, but it was not until the next day, the 16th of September, that the great battle of Antietam really began.

Jasmine and Myrtle listened eagerly to the story of Roxy's adventures since they had last met, and when she told them of the ledge where she had kept faithful watch, of the two squirrels that had become so tame, and of the house she had built for "Dinah," Jasmine and Myrtle both exclaimed that they wished they could visit the ledge.

"Perhaps we can; I'll ask Mother," said Roxy, and ran to the porch where the family were gathered.

"But the ledge is a mile from here; it will be too far for Myrtle and Ivy to walk," Mrs. Delfield said, but Roxy quickly responded:

"Myrtle and Ivy can ride on 'Beauty.'"

"So they can; and I think Etta-Belle had better go with you," said Mrs. Delfield, who, since Roxy had been carried off by the scout, was determined that some older person should always be near the little girl.

"May we take a lunch, Mother?" Roxy whispered, and Mrs. Delfield replied that she must

ask Dulcie, and the little girl ran to the kitchen where Dulcie and Etta-Belle were chattering about war and battles.

“Dar won’ be no slaves w’en dis war end,” Roxy heard Etta-Belle declare; “niggers’ll hev to look out fer derselves if Massa Linkum hev his way.”

Dulcie went off to the pantry to prepare the luncheon and Etta-Belle was well pleased to go with the girls to the distant ledge.

“Beauty” whinnied in evident delight as Jasmine and Myrtle ran toward him, and with Myrtle and Ivy mounted on his broad back and Jasmine and Roxy walking beside him, while Etta-Belle carrying the basket of luncheon followed on behind, the little party started down the lane, but came to a sudden stop when Roxy heard her father calling:

“Roxy! Roxy!”

“Yes, Father?” she called back.

“No signalling, remember!”

“Oh, Father! May I not signal to Polly to come to the ledge?”

“No, indeed.” Captain Delfield’s voice was firm. “Remember, Roxy: not a signal. Promise.”

"All right, Father. I won't signal," Roxy promised, but she was greatly disappointed; she had told Jasmine that she would let her signal to Polly, and Jasmine now said:

"I can signal, can't I, Roxy?"

Roxy shook her head. "No, Father said: 'No signalling,' so we can't," and for a few moments the girls walked on in silence, while behind them Etta-Belle sang:

"De yam will grow, de cotton blow,
We'll raise de rice an' corn,
Oh! Nebber yo' fear if nebber yo' hear
De driver blow his horn."

Etta-Belle had been born a slave; her early home had been in South Carolina, and she never told anyone how she had found her way to the hills of Maryland. Dulcie was sure that Etta-Belle had run away from the plantation where she had lived a slave; but the negro woman kept her secret. She now declared that she was "gwine ter b'long ter Missy Roxy, an' take keer ob her," and she smiled broadly whenever the little girls turned to speak to her.

The little party rested at the old sycamore, and then started up the slope to the ledge. Jasmine

and Myrtle climbed sturdily to the top, but little Ivy had to be carried most of the way by Etta-Belle, and Roxy dragged the basket of lunch, lifting it to rocks above her, or pulling it up from shelving ledges over which she had climbed.

They were all tired when they reached the scrubby oak tree, where they found "Dinah" safely resting in her own house. The squirrels could be heard scolding, and soon ventured from their hiding-places when Roxy called their names and put bits of gingerbread where they could see it.

Ivy was delighted when one of the squirrels was coaxed near enough to nibble a piece of gingerbread that she held toward him on the end of a stick, and wanted Roxy to catch him and carry him home. But Roxy shook her head.

"That would make him a prisoner, and I wouldn't do that," she said, and told the story of the Yankee boy whom she had fed and helped on his way. "The squirrel would hate being shut up just as much as that Yankee soldier did," she said soberly.

"Oh, Roxy, what wonderful things happen to you!" exclaimed Jasmine admiringly. "Just think, finding the Yankee soldier, and being taken

away from this ledge by a Confederate scout, and then riding to Sharpsburg with Union soldiers!" and Jasmine gave a little sigh. "Why do you s'pose, Roxy, so much happens to you?"

But Roxy shook her head soberly; she was thinking that none of her adventures had been very pleasant ones, excepting helping the Yankee soldier.

"I don't know," she replied, and as both the squirrels at that moment made a flying leap to Jasmine's shoulder the little girl was too well entertained to ask any more questions; but Roxy wondered, as she often did, if her Yankee soldier had reached safety and if she would ever see him again.

The little Hinham girls thought the ledge a fine playhouse, and when Roxy opened the basket and spread the luncheon on a smooth rock near Dinah's house they danced around it happily, singing the song they had sung on the day that Roxy had made her unexpected visit to the Hinham place:

"I heard fairy bells ringing—
And fairies were singing,
And dancing and bringing
Fairy honey to the one
Who wore the gold crown."

Etta-Belle looked on in smiling delight, thinking to herself that the Confederate scouts had brought her good fortune when they brought Roxy to her cabin.

Before the girls had finished their luncheon they all noticed a huge bird circling about high over their heads.

“It’s an eagle,” said Roxy; and then Jasmine remembered that in the spring an eagle had swooped down and carried off a young lamb from a field near the Hinham house.

“Roland says the eagles have nests on mountain tops, and that they are the strongest and bravest birds in the world,” she added.

“He keeps coming nearer and nearer!” exclaimed Myrtle, as the huge bird circled in the air above them, his wide-spread wings seeming to cast a shadow over the sunny ledge.

A moment after Myrtle’s exclamation Etta-Belle gave a shriek of terror and grabbed up the pole that Roxy had used for her signal flag; and she was none too soon, for the eagle with a wide swoop now darted down straight toward little Ivy, who with Dinah in her arms was looking up toward this wonderful bird; but Etta-Belle’s strong sweep of the pole struck the bird with

sufficient force to send it from its course and its sharp talons did not touch Ivy; and, evidently surprised by the unexpected assault, the bird made no further attack upon the girls but floated off toward the distant mountain top.

“We’s gwine home dis instan’ minute,” Etta-Belle declared, her voice trembling with fear, and the little girls scrambled down the ledge. Roxy carried “Dinah,” for she feared the eagle might return and make off with her treasured doll.

“Beauty” was hurried toward home at a good pace, while Jasmine and Roxy ran on behind him; now and then the little girls spoke of the danger Ivy had escaped, and Roxy began to think that the ledge was not a very safe place; and when they reached home and the older people heard the story of the eagle Grandma Miller promptly declared that Roxy must not again visit the ledge; and Roxy’s mother began to think that her little daughter was in danger whenever she was out of her mother’s sight.

In the late afternoon the Hinham’s rode off toward home, telling Roxy that the gray pony could remain at the Miller farm as long as Roxy stayed there.

“It’s just the same as if ‘Beauty’ was really

your own pony, Roxy," Jasmine said smilingly, as the two little girls said good-bye.

At that very moment, on the borders of the Antietam, his back toward the Potomac, Lee was making ready to meet the army of McClellan; and on the following morning, September 16th, 1862, the Confederates found themselves facing the enemy who from the opposite side of the Antietam River opened fire upon them. Equal in courage, Northern and Southern Armies faced each other as the Union divisions, by bridge and ford, crossed the Antietam and met the Confederates on the open field only to be driven back with serious losses. The brave veteran, General Mansfield, was killed, General Hooker severely wounded, and for a time it seemed that Lee would win the battle.

At the stone bridge across the Antietam General Burnside held back Lee's forces, and pressed forward to the heights, and nightfall brought the battle to an end without either army having triumphed.

All that day Roxy kept close at home. The sound of echoing guns told the people of the hill-side farms of the terrible battle, and they could think of nothing else.

On the next morning, September 18th, Lee resolved to retreat, and on the night of the eighteenth he crossed the Potomac by the Shepards-town ford into Virginia. And now for a time the Union Army remained quiet near Sharpsburg.

It was on September 19th that Roland Hinham rode into the Miller yard with the news that Lee's troops were crossing the Potomac into Virginia, and Grandma Miller and Mrs. Delfield at once began to pack baskets of food, bandages for the wounded soldiers in the camps beyond Sharpsburg, and packages of clothing upon which they had been at work all the summer; Mrs. Miller and Jacob started off early that afternoon with a well-filled wagon.

"Can't say when we'll be back," Grandma Miller had declared, and Roxy went down to the stone wall and stood there until the wagon vanished in the distance.

She looked down at the old stone bridge, remembering the day in early summer when she had quarrelled with Polly, and come running back to discover the Yankee soldier.

"That seems a long time ago," thought Roxy, remembering all that had happened since then.

She was just turning back to the house when

Polly, mounted on "Brownie," came trotting over the bridge, and Roxy's solemn thoughts vanished as she slipped through the opening in the wall and ran down the slope to meet her.

"Polly! Polly!" she called; "General Lee is driven back from Maryland!"

CHAPTER XVII

POLLY'S PLAN

POLLY had already heard the news from Sharpsburg, and as she brought "Brownie" to a walking pace up the lane Roxy ran along beside her and the two girls rejoiced that the armies had not come on the road leading past their homes, and that the battle of the Antietam, as it was henceforth called, had not been fought in these familiar fields.

"Brownie" was left in the yard, and Polly and Roxy went to their favorite seat under the big butternut tree, and Polly was amazed to hear the story of the huge eagle that had swooped down so near to the top of the ledge.

"If it had got hold of Ivy the eagle would have carried her off!" Roxy said solemnly, and then added: "And Grandma says I am not to go to the top of the ledge again; and the squirrels will forget all about me," and Roxy's smile vanished, for she had grown fond of "Lee" and

“ Jackson ” and was sorry that she could not see them again.

But Polly's thoughts were on the errand that had brought her to the Miller farm, and for a moment she made no response to Roxy; then she said:

“ Roxy, what did you do with your paper animals? ”

“ They are in boxes in my closet,” replied the surprised Roxy, wondering why Polly wanted to know.

“ Well, Roxy! All those soldiers who were wounded are in houses and farms and tents along the Antietam River; some of them will have to stay there for days, maybe weeks, before they can get out; and nothing to amuse them. And, Roxy, I thought perhaps you could take your circus over, and dress up in the old white hat, and the blue coat and the yarn whiskers, just as you did for your grandma's birthday, and go to the tents and tell the men about the animals. I know it would make them laugh and cheer them up. It was so funny!” and Polly began to laugh as she recalled the queer little figure Roxy had made as she told the story of “ capturing ” the paper lions and elephants.

“Would you go with me, Polly?” Roxy asked, wondering if she would have courage to present the “circus” before strange soldiers.

“Yes; and probably your grandma would go too, if your mother did not. Let’s go ask your father what he thinks of my plan,” suggested Polly, and the two girls ran indoors to find Captain Delfield, who was resting on the old sofa in the sitting-room.

He listened to Polly’s plan, and said that it was an excellent idea, and praised her for thinking of it, and called Mrs. Delfield who also declared that she believed the sick and wounded soldiers would welcome Roxy and her “circus,” and that the little girl could in this way be of real service.

“When Grandma gets home she can tell us what she thinks about it; and if she approves she will be the best one to take you girls and make arrangements where Roxy shall take the ‘animals’ and tell how they were ‘captured,’” and a smile came over Mrs. Delfield’s face as she remembered how amusing Roxy’s “circus” had been.

Polly promised to ride over early the next morning, as the Delfields felt sure Mrs. Miller would return that night, and said she would be

ready to start at once for Sharpsburg, and would bring the tall white hat, blue coat and yarn "whiskers" for Roxy.

Roxy went out to the yard to bid her friend good-bye.

"Oh, Polly! I hope I can do it right," she said a little fearfully as Polly mounted the little brown horse and looked down from her seat in the saddle at Roxy's sober face.

"Of course you'll do it right, Roxy-Doxy. All you have to do is just make believe that you have real animals, and that you really did capture the lions in Africa, and the elephants in India! Oh, Roxy! I really want to see it again myself," and Polly's gay little laugh made Roxy forget her fears and smile happily.

"I guess I can; I am going to fix the animals all up this afternoon so they will be ready," she said, and Polly nodded approvingly, promising to be over in good season the next day, and "Brownie" trotted briskly off.

Roxy ran back to the house and brought the boxes of paper animals down to the sitting-room, and seated at her little table with her box of water-color paints she worked busily until dinner-time, and for the greater part of the afternoon.

Roxy's thoughts travelled off to the scene of the recent battle, near which the Union Army was encamped, and she began to wonder if she would see any of the great generals of whom her father spoke: General McClellan who her father said had saved the Union Army; General Burnside, who had so bravely held the Antietam Bridge, over which at his command the 51st Pennsylvania regiment and the 51st New York had rushed at a double quick which the Confederates could not resist, and had planted the Stars and Stripes on the opposite bank amid cheers from every part of the battle-field from where they could be seen.

The little Yankee girl began to realize that it would be a wonderful thing if she could really do something to help the soldiers who had faced such peril to protect the Union; and when early that evening Grandma Miller and Jacob reached home Roxy was the first to welcome them, and instantly began to tell Mrs. Miller of Polly's plan for Roxy to take her circus to the hospital tents along the Antietam.

"I declare! Polly is a jewel! It will do a world of good! I wish I had thought of it myself," said Mrs. Miller. "Many of those soldiers must lay in tents or in the near-by houses and

barns, for long days with nothing to cheer or amuse them. Roxy," and Grandma Miller's hand rested gently on the little girl's shoulder as they walked toward the house, "it will be a beautiful thing if you can make these men smile and, for a time, forget the cruelty of war," she said.

"Polly says that no one could help laughing because I look so funny in the coat and hat and whiskers," Roxy replied; and Mrs. Miller smiled and owned that Polly was right.

Mrs. Miller had that day visited several of the hospital tents, and she was sure the officers in charge would welcome Roxy and her "circus," and it was decided that on the following day Grandma Miller should go with Polly and Roxy to the Hagerstown road beyond Sharpsburg.

Polly arrived in good season the next morning driving "Brownie," harnessed to the open wagon in which she had so often driven Roxy about the country roads. Roxy's circus costume, high hat, long blue coat and "whiskers," were in a box under the wagon-seat, and Roxy brought out her boxes containing the paper animals, and Grandma Miller had baskets of fruit, freshly

baked bread, and rolls of old cotton cloth, for hospital use, that were packed in the back of the wagon; then Mrs. Miller and Roxy seated themselves beside Polly and drove off.

As they rode along Grandma Miller suggested that Roxy should repeat what she meant to say to the soldiers as she pointed out the animals and told of their capture; and as Roxy began her story of facing raging lions, following camels across the desert, and taming elephants, both Mrs. Miller and Polly laughed in delight.

Polly suggested one or two amusing descriptions for Roxy to add to her story, and so did Grandma Miller, and when they reached the historic town of Sharpsburg, with its old houses of stone or brick, its arched doorways and square porches with Colonial pillars, and began to see Union soldiers everywhere, Roxy was gaining courage and began to feel sure that she could describe imaginary dangers without even smiling at them.

Mrs. Miller directed Polly to follow the road leading north, toward Hagerstown, and told her to stop near a group of tents where sentinels paced slowly back and forth. One of these men smilingly answered Mrs. Miller's questions.

“Yes,” he said, “General McClellan was in his tent,” and he would take him any message the ladies might wish delivered.

“Perhaps you will let my little granddaughter carry my message,” suggested Grandma Miller, and the sentinel said the little girl could go to the general’s tent with him, and helped the surprised Roxy from the wagon.

“You can tell the general your plan, Roxy, and ask his permission,” said Mrs. Miller, and before Roxy had time to ask a question she was hand in hand with the tall soldier walking toward a small tent in front of which stood two more sentinels one of whom, at word from Roxy’s companion, entered the tent; and a moment later Roxy found herself gazing up into the kindly dark eyes of the great General George B. McClellan.

“What can I do for you, little girl?” he asked kindly, and Roxy made her best curtsy, and said:

“If you please, sir, I have brought a circus to show the wounded soldiers. I think,” she added quickly, “it would make them laugh!”

“‘Make them laugh!’” repeated the general, and a little smile crept over his grave face.

“Well, my child, if you can do that for my poor boys you will be doing me the greatest possible service. Come in and tell me about it,” and Roxy followed him into the tent and eagerly began her story, to which the war-worn and tired general listened with interest, and when Roxy finished by asking anxiously if he thought her “circus” would not amuse the men in the hospital tents, adding: “I guess I look funny enough in the long blue coat and high white hat and whiskers to make anybody laugh,” General McClellan answered quickly: “I would like to see the circus myself, and I will go with you to the hospital tent near the Dunker Church. But what is your name, little girl?”

“Roxana Delfield. My father is a Union soldier, and he was wounded and we are at Grandma Miller’s,” she replied, as she walked beside the friendly soldier to where Grandma and Polly were anxiously waiting.

“Where is your real home?” continued the general, and Roxy smilingly responded:

“I am a Yankee girl; that is what everybody calls me, because my home is in Massachusetts.”

Before the general could reply Grandma Miller came hurrying to meet them, and Roxy

heard the general thank her for her thought for his suffering men, and tell her that they needed cheer and entertainment as much as they needed care and medicine.

“Brownie” was led off by one of the soldiers, and another took charge of Roxy’s boxes, while Grandma Miller, Polly and Roxy, carrying the baskets of fruit and food, followed General McClellan to the little stone church near the woods. One of the army doctors came hurrying to meet them, and quickly pointed out the tents where Roxy’s circus would be welcomed, and Polly helped Roxy make ready.

“Don’t be afraid, Roxy. Just make believe, remember, that you really did capture the lions,” said Polly smilingly, as General McClellan pointed out the first tent they were to enter.

Polly and Roxy, carrying the boxes of paper animals, went in and General McClellan gravely introduced Roxy as “Signor Delroxana, who has kindly brought his troupe of wild animals to amuse you.”

There was a murmur of laughter and exclamations of amusement from the rough cots where the soldiers lay as Roxy, in her queer costume, bowed to right and left, and, with Polly’s help,

arranged her procession of animals on a long narrow table. When she picked up the hazel stick, that Polly had brought, and faced the eager-eyed men, who were all delighted and amused by this unexpected entertainment, and when Roxy gravely announced: "Gentlemen, these animals are not dangerous ——" there was a burst of laughter and applause that made it difficult for Roxy not to laugh with them; but she remembered that would spoil it all, and she went on with the story of her adventures, interrupted now and then by the laughter of her listeners.

That day Roxy visited a number of tents, and the circus was evidently approved of by the soldiers, and by the anxious and tired doctors who thanked the little Yankee girl, and urged her to come again.

It was early twilight when Grandma Miller, Polly and Roxy, accompanied by a young officer in whose care General McClellan had left them, stood near the little stone church while "Brownie" was being harnessed.

The young officer helped them into the wagon, and, raising his cap, stood smiling up at Roxy.

"You don't remember me, do you, little

Yankee girl?" he asked, and Roxy's face was for a moment grave and questioning, and then she smiled radiantly.

"Yes, yes, I do! You are the Yankee prisoner!" she declared.

"Who you helped escape!" he added, and he then told them that his name was Philip Carver, and he briefly described his flight to safety, and earnestly thanked the little girl who had brought him food, and, as he declared, saved his life.

"I meant to get a day's leave and ride over to your farm before leaving here on purpose to thank you," he added, and Mrs. Miller urged him to visit the farm and he gladly promised; and now they bade him a friendly good-bye and started for home.

"It has been a wonderful day," Polly declared, as "Brownie" trotted swiftly through Sharpsburg along the road leading to the distant farm. "Just think, General McClellan shook hands with us, and praised Roxy! We will always remember to-day, won't we, Roxy?"

"He praised you too, Polly!" Roxy eagerly declared. "I told him it was your plan to bring the circus, and he said you were a noble girl!"

Polly laughed happily. "I will remember that," she said.

Roxy was tired out, and before they reached the farm she was nodding with sleep, and when Etta-Belle came running to lift her from the wagon Roxy was quite ready to let the negro woman carry her into the house.

But once indoors before the open fire she became wide awake and eager to tell her mother and father all the events of the exciting day: of General McClellan, and his friendly message to her father, and of all the laughter her "circus" had brought from the amused soldiers.

"And best of all, Father, I found the Yankee prisoner. His name is Philip Carver, and he is coming to spend the day," she concluded happily.

CHAPTER XVIII

A VISITOR

It was now late September, and the fertile country along the Antietam was in full autumn beauty. Harvests had been gathered, and fields of yellow stubble were golden under the September sun, and the distant mountains each day showed new shades of jewel-like blues when young Lieutenant Carver kept his promise to visit the Miller farm, and sitting on the porch beside Captain Delfield he pointed out the thicket of laurel near the highway where he had concealed himself, and where Roxy had brought him food; and he listened to the story of Roxy's adventure on the ledge when the Confederate scout had discovered her signalling, and had tried to make the little girl tell the reason for her being stationed on the top of the ledge day after day.

“And I really think that Roxy may have saved me a good bit of trouble,” said Captain Delfield.

“If those Confederate scouts had discovered a Union soldier here they might have carried me off to Richmond; but Roxy’s resolve not to let them know her secret kept me out of danger,” and he smiled down at his little daughter who was sitting on the porch steps, and had been listening eagerly, and now felt that her long lonely days on the distant ledge, her fears when carried away by the Confederate scout, had been indeed worth while if they had saved her father from the danger of being taken a prisoner. She remembered Etta-Belle’s rough cabin in the lonely field, and that the negro woman had been friendless and alone until Roxy’s coming had brought her to the Miller farm where she had found a home and could remain in safety. And while Lieutenant Carver and Captain Delfield talked of President Lincoln’s recent Proclamation of Emancipation, that declared the freedom of all negroes held in slavery in the United States, Roxy’s thoughts dwelt happily on all the events of the past summer, and she resolved that she would that very day begin a letter to Amy Fletcher, in far-off Newburyport, and tell her of all the adventures that had befallen a little Yankee girl during her visit to Antietam.

When Dulcie came to say that dinner was ready the young lieutenant held out his hand to Roxy and they walked into the dining-room together.

It was the best dinner that Dulcie could prepare. There were fried chicken, and creamed potatoes, late peas, and stewed corn. There were three kinds of jelly, hot batter-bread and fresh butter; there was new cider right from the press, and steamed apple dumplings with cream sauce. It was no wonder that the young soldier, who had lived on camp fare and who had known the hunger of a man in prison, declared it the finest dinner he had ever tasted. "But," he added laughingly, with a nod toward Roxy, "nothing can ever again taste as good to me as that cold chicken that this little Yankee girl brought me as I lay hidden behind the laurels with my pursuers almost within reach of me."

In the afternoon Grandma Miller and Roxy walked to the ledge with Lieutenant Carver, and from the top Roxy once more signalled to Polly, who by good fortune happened to see the signal and waved in response, and the soldier declared that he did not wonder the Confederate scouts had been misled by Roxy's signalling, and had

believed her to have been stationed there by Yankee soldiers.

“Lee” and “Jackson,” the gray squirrels, were not to be seen, much to Roxy’s disappointment; but Grandma Miller admired Dinah’s house, and suggested that it would be a good plan for Roxy to build one like it, only perhaps larger, under the butternut tree, and Roxy decided that she would begin it on the following day.

On their return to the house it was time for Lieutenant Carver to start back for camp, and he bade them all a grateful good-bye, and again declared that but for Roxy’s kindness and courage he could not have evaded his pursuers and made his escape.

They all stood on the porch and watched him ride away; and after Grandma Miller and Roxy’s father and mother had entered the house the little girl wandered down the slope and stood by the wall from which place she could see the road stretching out like a gray ribbon toward the distant hills.

Roxy smiled to herself as she stood here, for she had only pleasant things to think of as she remembered the delight of the wounded soldiers in her “circus,” the words of praise the great

general of the Union Army, George B. McClellan, had given her, and, best of all, she thought happily, was the fact that Philip Carver had said that but for her help he would not have escaped.

As she stood there Polly's familiar call sounded from the highway "Who-whoo-who!" and Roxy quickly responded and a moment later Polly came running up the slope.

"Here I am, Roxy-Doxy," she called smilingly. "I came over to hear all about the Yankee soldier." And hand in hand the girl whose home was in the Maryland hills, and the little Yankee girl walked toward the swing under the big butternut tree.

The Stories in this Series are:

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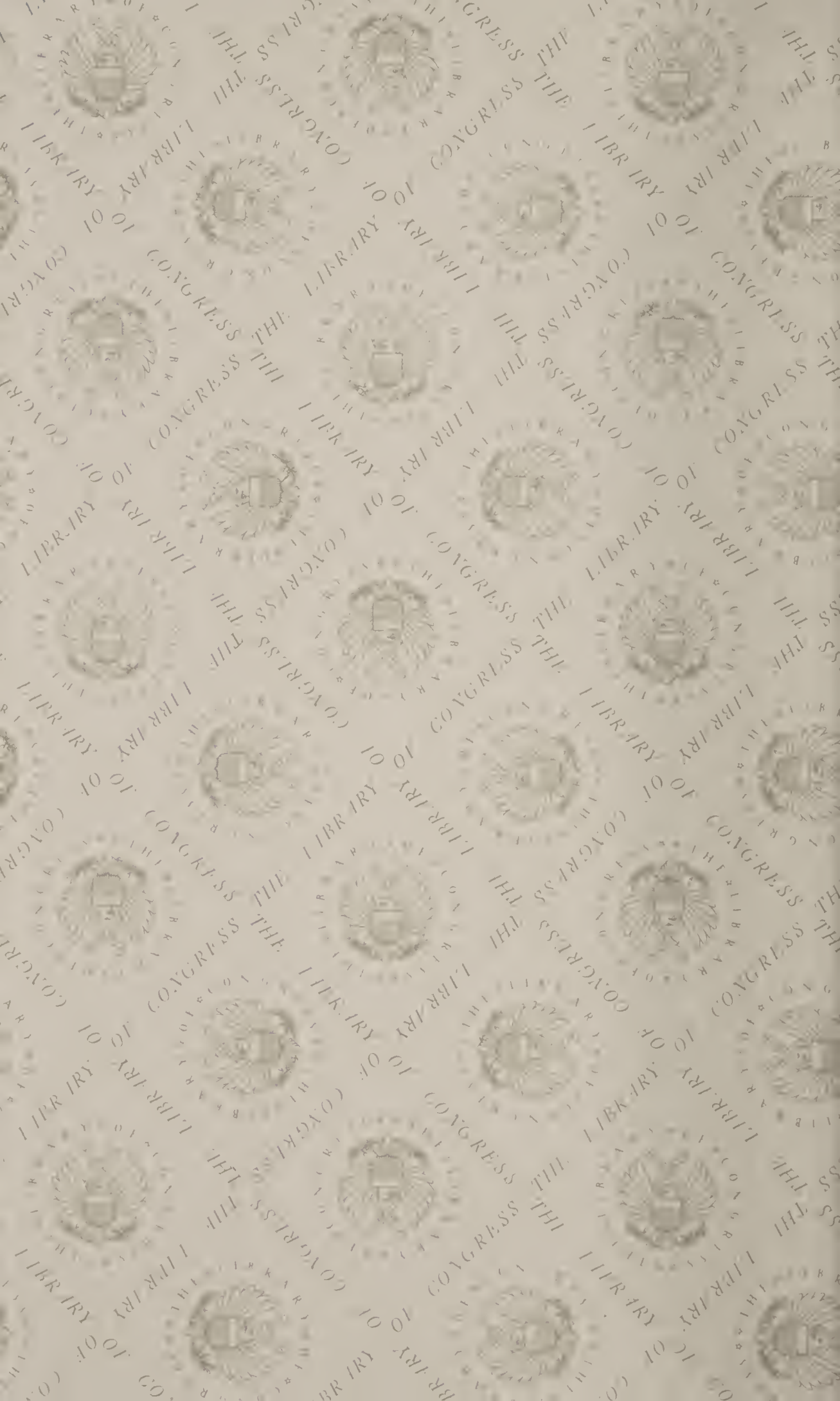
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